



FIRST LOOK! NEW PHOTOS FROM EPISODE III

STAR WARS INSIDER

MARK HAMILL

FILM DIRECTOR
BROADWAY STAR
COMIC GEEK

Behind the Scenes of the
DARTH MAUL
DEATH MATCH

Tuning In the Force
Star Wars
Radio Dramas

SECRETS of the
Rebel Hangar
at Yavin 4

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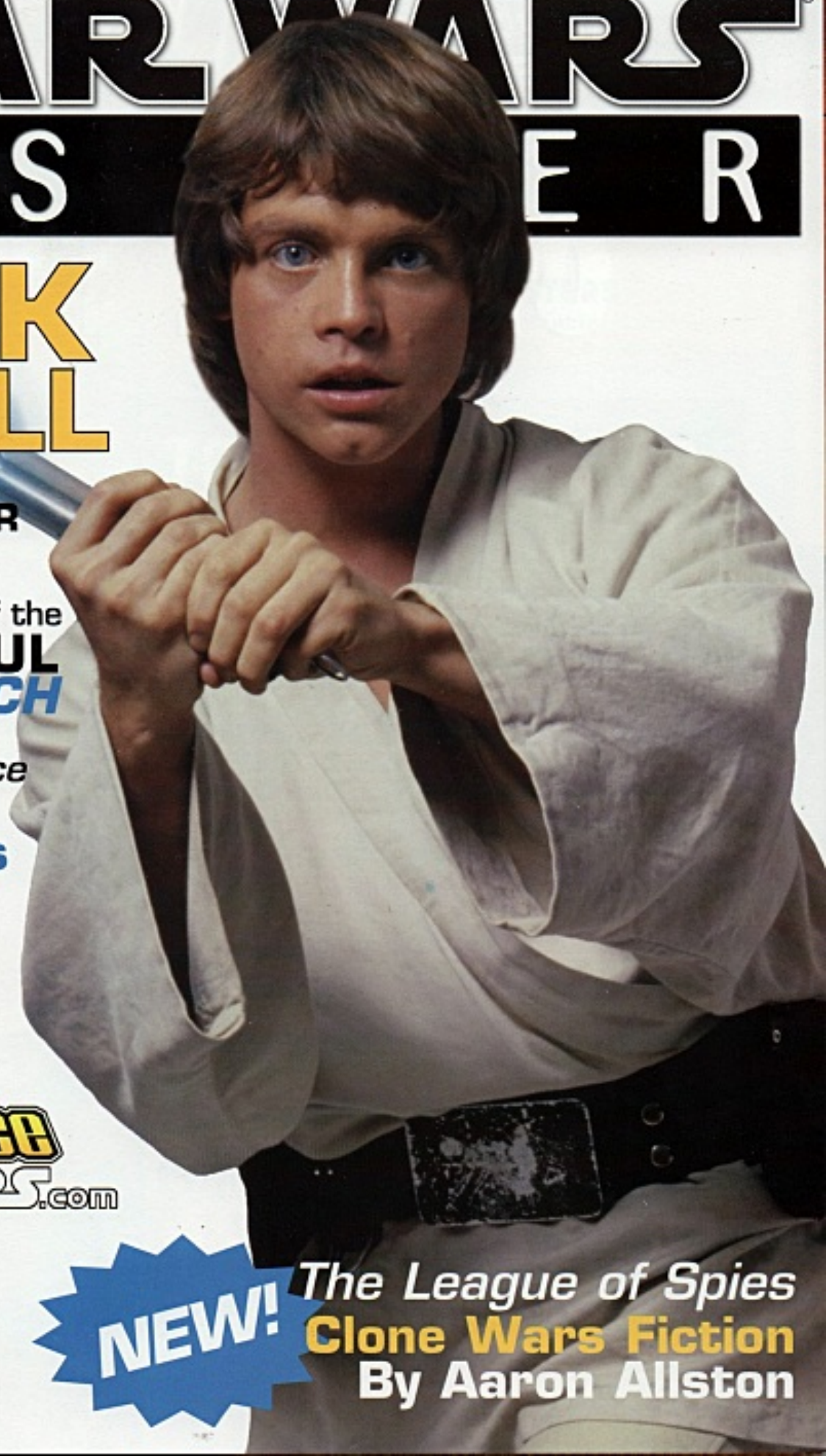
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NEW!

The League of Spies
Clone Wars Fiction
By Aaron Allston



Insider 73

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Prequel Update

by Jane Irene Kelly

The latest on Episode III from Producer Rick McCallum.



Return of the Jedi

by Dave Gross & Jenny Scott

An Insider exclusive interview with the man who was Luke Skywalker: Mark Hamill takes the stage as a dance instructor in *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*, gets behind the camera with *Comic Book: The Movie*, and lends his voice to an animated TV host in *The Wrong Coast*.



A State of Nelvana

by Shane Turgeon

Cartoon Network wasn't the first studio to bring Star Wars characters to animated life. Travel back in time with the founders of Nelvana Studios, creators of the *Droids* and *Ewoks* animated series.



Dueling Jedi

by Ron Magid

The first time Obi-Wan Kenobi double-teamed a Sith Lord, his partner lost more than a hand. Go behind the scenes of one of the most thrilling lightsaber battles ever filmed.



Radio Days

by Rich Handley

If you haven't heard the NPR *Star Wars* radio dramas, then you don't know the whole story of the original trilogy. The voice actors look back on their incarnations of the classic characters.



The League of Spies

by Aaron Allston

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On the Cover

Fans recognize his face as that of Luke Skywalker and his voice as that of The Joker, but Mark Hamill is a triple-threat performer with new projects heading for a stage, a screen, and a television near you.



What I Did On My Summer Vacation



There aren't many cases where working 12-hour days for four months would qualify as a "vacation," but the trip I took last summer was absolutely amazing both for me and for the online Star Wars fans who came along for the visit.

As a starwars.com content developer, I was on set for every day of principal photography for Episode III. Subscribers to Hyperspace (the starwars.com premium service) would read my daily diary detailing the events of production. The most unusual day-to-day challenge was finding places for a pair of webcams that spied on Fox Studios Australia. Subscribers could watch a live image refresh once every 20 seconds, 12 hours a day, six days a week. I figured it would become a casual distraction for members to check every now and then while doing other online stuff.

I figured wrong.

I had no idea that an online community of addicts would develop. People would watch the camera for 12 hours a day and endlessly discuss what they saw. The pressure was on to entertain.

The Creature Shop was the first place to welcome the camera. It was there as they outfitted towering mannequins with coats of Wookiee fur and as their sculptors developed the new macabre aliens played by Bruce Spence and a host of gangly extras. They even crafted little stop-motion movies with their Star Wars LEGO sets, and online fans scrutinized them for possible Episode III clues.

At first, I feared the webcam would become a nuisance for the busy production crew. To my surprise, it became a welcome distraction from what can often be tedious work. I knew it had been accepted when Producer Rick McCallum called me and said, "Ewan wants the webcam in stunts right now." Hayden Christensen and Ewan McGregor were practicing their big duel, and I guess they wanted to show off their incredible moves.

"So, what are they saying?" Ewan asked. It was a common question, since everyone knew me as the web guy connected to online fandom. I pulled up the starwars.com forums and wondered what the posters would think if they knew Obi-Wan and Anakin were reading their words over my shoulder.

Once filming started, the actors rightfully focused on the movie cameras rather than the web-based ones, but the crew continued to embrace the eye of Hyperspace. The interaction that followed was unprecedented. While many fans felt welcomed into the making of a Star Wars film, it was also the first time many on the crew got a real taste of the love and devotion of those fans.

In a very real way, thousands of Hyperspace subscribers were there with us in Sydney watching something special and unique unfold—the crafting of the final Star Wars movie, the beginning of the last leg of a long journey. There has really been nothing like it, and while it was hard work lugging the cameras and cables from stage to stage, that "work" definitely outshines any vacation I've ever been on.

Pablo Hidalgo
Internet Content Provider, starwars.com

76 Comics Link

by Daniel Wallace

The Clone Wars rage on in Dark Horse Comics, from the deadly Asajj Ventress to the noble Finis Valorum.

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Hot or not, curry and collectibles don't only.

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by Hasbro

After a visit to the set of Episode III, the toymakers at Hasbro are ready to reveal themselves to the fans... er, the retailers.

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Do you know the score? Prove it by completing this brain-bending puzzle.

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by Pablo Hidalgo

Why isn't Coruscant crumbling? What's up with Luke throwing away his lightsaber? And why is it harder to electrocute him than the Dark Lord of the Sith?

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Isn't it just too cute when couples dress alike?

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On one hand, many of you have written to ask us to lift the poetry ban once again. On the other hand, Mary threatens to throttle Dave if he recites another couplet over their shared cubicle wall. (And she can do it.) On the third hand, haiku seem harmless enough....

The rules: Send us your Star Wars haiku. You can submit as many as you like, but each must arrive on a separate postcard from an exotic locale (we're not picky; Gary, Indiana, suits us just fine). No email. No rhyming. And for pity's sake, don't tell Mary!



Mauled

My good friend Scott "Maul" Williams (501st Florida Garrison Commanding Officer) is the best Maul costumer out there, and we were all thrilled to hear that Ray Park would be attending Dragon*Con this year. Saturday after the parade we went down to the celebrity signing area. Scott prowled the area doing his best Maul and approached the table where Ray was signing. Ray's manager pulled Scott forward immediately, and Ray said something about Scott's costume being really cool.

Later that afternoon, Ray was scheduled to give a talk, at which time the 501st made him an honorary member of the Legion, and Scott presented a plaque to Ray. Ray got a big kick out of the whole thing and commented on how great the costume was. The presentation and demonstration Ray gave was a blast—he's a funny guy! After the Star Wars costume contest—which Scott won for Best The Phantom Menace Male for the "training outfit" he



created—we went back down to the celebrity area to meet with Ray again. After making our way through the line, we finally had a chance to chat a few minutes and get a couple of autographs and pictures taken with him.

**LAURA S. FEIST
SCOTTSDALE, AZ**

Nice outfit! But what we want to know is, Who would win in a fight?

Backstage Pass

I was so inspired by your story of Kevin LaNeave's signature collection (as reported in *Bantha Tracks* in the Fan Club edition of *Insider* #71) that I jumped on tickets as soon as I heard Mark Hamill was performing in a Broadway play entitled *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*.

The night of the show, I meticulously planned my mission and set off with a camera, an 8"x10" glossy, and my poster (the latter two items have numerous signatures from some of the other Star Wars actors).

We had front-row seats and immensely enjoyed the two-person show, which truly highlights Mark's acting abilities. I highly recommend attending if you're in the NYC area.

Afterward, we rushed to the stage door after being warned that Mr. Hamill usually makes a dash for his car right after the performance. There were only a handful of other patrons out there, most with just a

Rebel Rumblings, continued on page 91

Wanna Rumble?

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Insider 73

About the Contributors



Aaron Allston is a Texas writer whose interests include history, mythology, movies, pulp magazines, and cats. Though determined since childhood to become a novelist, As a teenager in the summer of 1977, Aaron did not imagine, as a teenager in the summer of 1977, that he would someday be associated with *Star Wars*. His website, which includes "Frequently Asked Questions" files for his novels, can be found at aaronallston.com.



Star Wars first inspired **Ron Magid** when he saw it opening night at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. Ron, who now writes about visual effects for *Premiere* and *American Cinematographer*, continues to be inspired by the lasting impact of George Lucas' saga on this constantly evolving art form.



Rich Handley is the coauthor of "Lady Luck" in *Star Wars Tales* #3, as well as West End Games' *Adventure Journal* story "Crimson Bounty." The managing editor of *Advanced Imaging* magazine by day, Rich has been writing for *Insider* since 1998. Rumors that he is the next in line to play James Bond are entirely untrue.



Shane Turgeon works in the television industry in Edmonton, Alberta. In addition to being a *Star Wars* collector, Shane is also a tattoo aficionado and runs tattoosandtoys.com. He is a contributing staff member for www.rebelscum.com.



Benjamin Harper is a lifelong *Star Wars* geek whose obsession reached its peak when he joined Lucas Licensing in 1999 as an editor. He currently resides in New York City, where he works at Scholastic Inc. In his spare time, he swims, plays his Theremin "Jesse," watches tragically bad horror and science fiction movies, and spends far too much money on eBay.



Daniel Wallace has authored or coauthored nearly a dozen books, including the upcoming *DC Universe Encyclopedia* and the *New York Times* bestseller *Star Wars: The New Essential Guide to Characters*. When not immersed in strange worlds, he enjoys life in Detroit, which is kind of a strange world anyway.

PREQUEL

"As rough as it may be, you have to look at the whole film to really see what you have."

—Rick McCallum



Photo by Halina Krukowski

Thanksgiving was less than two weeks away when we last caught up with producer Rick McCallum at Skywalker Ranch, which was electric with the hum of moviemaking. At the time, the challenge for the Episode III crew was to complete a rough cut of the entire movie by Christmas, as well as a solid 25-minute sequence to be handed over to the ILM team by January 5, so that the visual-effects work could officially begin.

"We're in a weird, scary place right now, but that's normal for this stage because we don't really have a movie yet," said McCallum, who was relaxing for just a few minutes in his office in the Main House at Skywalker Ranch, which had been serving as central command for Episode III production since the crew's return from the first round of shooting in Australia last summer.

The mid-November schedule for McCallum, director George Lucas, and editors Roger Barton and Ben Burtt, was very structured and intense. According to McCallum, Lucas started his day promptly at 9 a.m. and focused solely on editing tasks with Burtt until 1 p.m., which included honing some of the film's "major space battles, fight sequences and digital work."

After a short lunch, Lucas checked up on the progress of the Art and Animatics Departments, which were hard at work in the Main House, with the artists creating more environments for Episode III and the animatics team laying the foundation for crucial film elements—such as the look and movement of various creatures or vehicles—that later will be enhanced by ILM.

"When George is working with the animatics team, he's studying visual-effects shots that are being animated for use as placeholders for the rough cut of the 'complete' film that we'll view before Christmas," explained McCallum. "What we'll see will be very crude—with weird background paintings and shots that won't be dynamic—but they will give us a good indication of where we are with everything."

He added, "Even though we are doing work now, building spaceship models and digital environments, and conducting research and development, the real work for ILM doesn't begin until January."

During the last two months of 2003, Lucas and Barton—who was editing the dramatic portions of the film—met daily at 3 p.m. to "go straight through the movie—actually assembling the picture and creating the first rough cut of Episode III," according to McCallum. At the time we talked with McCallum, he said the duo was "already about halfway through" the process, which would "probably continue all the way until the end of February 2004," even after the initial rough cut is finished.

"Once we get the rough cut, we can start to change and replace things, cut sequences, and so on. By the end of the year, we will know what the problems or the missed opportunities are, and it will help us to plan our [additional shooting] in March," he said.

"As rough as it may be, you have to look at the whole film to really see what you have and what you must [rethink]," said McCallum. "You look at it and say, 'Wow, we never thought of those two people together' or 'This dialogue doesn't make any sense now

that we cut this other scene.' We fix it up."

Following a thorough review of Episode III's first incarnation as a complete film, McCallum will head to England to start the "prep and reshoot period" at Elstree Studios in London. McCallum said he is looking forward to the trip because "being on location" is his "favorite part" of the moviemaking process, and for a moment he reminisced about the shooting for Episode III that took place in Australia.

"I really love shooting on location," he said. "When we were in Australia, it was just great—the people, the culture, everything. It really was an amazing experience for George and me."

The London trip in March will be just one of three rounds of "pick-up shooting" that the Episode III crew—and in some cases, the cast—will undergo before the film is ready for release. McCallum said a week of additional shooting is already planned for November 2004, as well as "three or four days in January or February of 2005 for any last-minute touches."

This touch-up work may include not only the removal of certain sequences but also the addition of entire scenes. This happened during production for Episode II, when the action-packed droid-factory scene—featuring Anakin, Padmé, C-3PO, and R2-D2 trying to escape capture on Geonosis—was added.

"What happened with the droid factory is we realized—after reviewing the film during the pick-up shooting in London—that there was just too much plot. The [characters] arrived at the planet and were instantly captured. It wasn't exciting. So instead of saying, 'Well, we screwed up,' we decided to do something about it," explained McCallum, who added, "I'm

UPDATE

FOR EPISODE III

by Jane Irene Kelly

sure something like that will happen with Episode III, but there isn't a scene that has manifested itself yet."

Working out Episode III's sound is also on the schedule for the crew's London gig. When they arrive there in March, Ben Burtt will "segue from being the animatics editor to being the sound designer," according to McCallum. "He'll start recording and designing the soundtrack around the beginning of April."

Speaking of soundtracks, John Williams will be gearing up in the fall of 2004 to compose the music for Episode III. "John will start work in September, and then he'll spend the next two to three months writing music," McCallum said. "In January and February of 2005, we'll record the soundtrack in London, at Abbey Road."

Although last November McCallum was looking ahead to a year filled with the inevitable stress and craziness of movie-making—especially for a film that still had so far to go before being considered even a rough draft of the ultimate final vision—he said he has been pleased with the progress of Episode III.

"It's going well, and I'm very happy," he said with a smile. "Sure, it's a nervous period. We don't know what this thing is going to look like yet. But we're getting there." ☺

Hayden Christensen (Anakin Skywalker) looks pleased after a grueling but satisfying lightsaber battle with Ewan McGregor on an Australian soundstage of Episode III.



Photo by Rayn Nelson Jr.

PREQUEL UPDATE



My, what a big head you have! Actor Silas Carson undergoes his transformation into Jedi Master Ki-Adi-Mundi under the hands of (left) prosthetic make-up technician Sophie Fleming and (right) prosthetic make-up and hair technician Kath Brown.

A better shot than stormtroopers? A well-armored Neimoidian gunner guards a conference room on a strange new planet in *Star Wars: Episode III*.

Somewhat older, definitely wiser, but still pondering the fate of the galaxy, Jedi Master Mace Windu (Samuel L. Jackson) takes a moment for reflection in the Jedi Council chamber.

Actors Hayden Christensen (Anakin Skywalker) and Ian McDiarmid (Supreme Chancellor Palpatine) discuss a major scene in the Supreme Chancellor's office with director George Lucas.



Photo by Merrick Morton



Photo by Merrick Morton

Photo by Ralph Nielsen Jr.



Photo by Ralph Nielsen Jr.





Photo by Ralph Nelson Jr.

Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) talks to Commander Cody (Temuera Morrison) and another clone trooper (Bodie Taylor) in front of his new Jedi starfighter—complete with droid R4-G9. The set, on Fox Studios Australia's Stage 5, represents a landing platform aboard a Republic battle cruiser. In Episode III, only Morrison's and Taylor's heads will be seen above CG-clone trooper-armored bodies.

Look out below! Trying to watch where he's heading, Obi-Wan Kenobi takes a plunge while aboard a Trade Federation cruiser.

Snuggling up to the boss, director George Lucas, are two stalwart employees who worked on both Star Wars Episodes II and III in Australia, and finally got brief walk-on roles as senators. At left is publicity assistant Lisa Shaunnassy and at right is Jacqui Louez, assistant to producer Rick McCallum and director Lucas.

Jedi Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen) settles in for some fierce combat while flying his own Jedi starfighter.



Photo by Mervyn Martin

Photo by Ralph Nelson Jr.

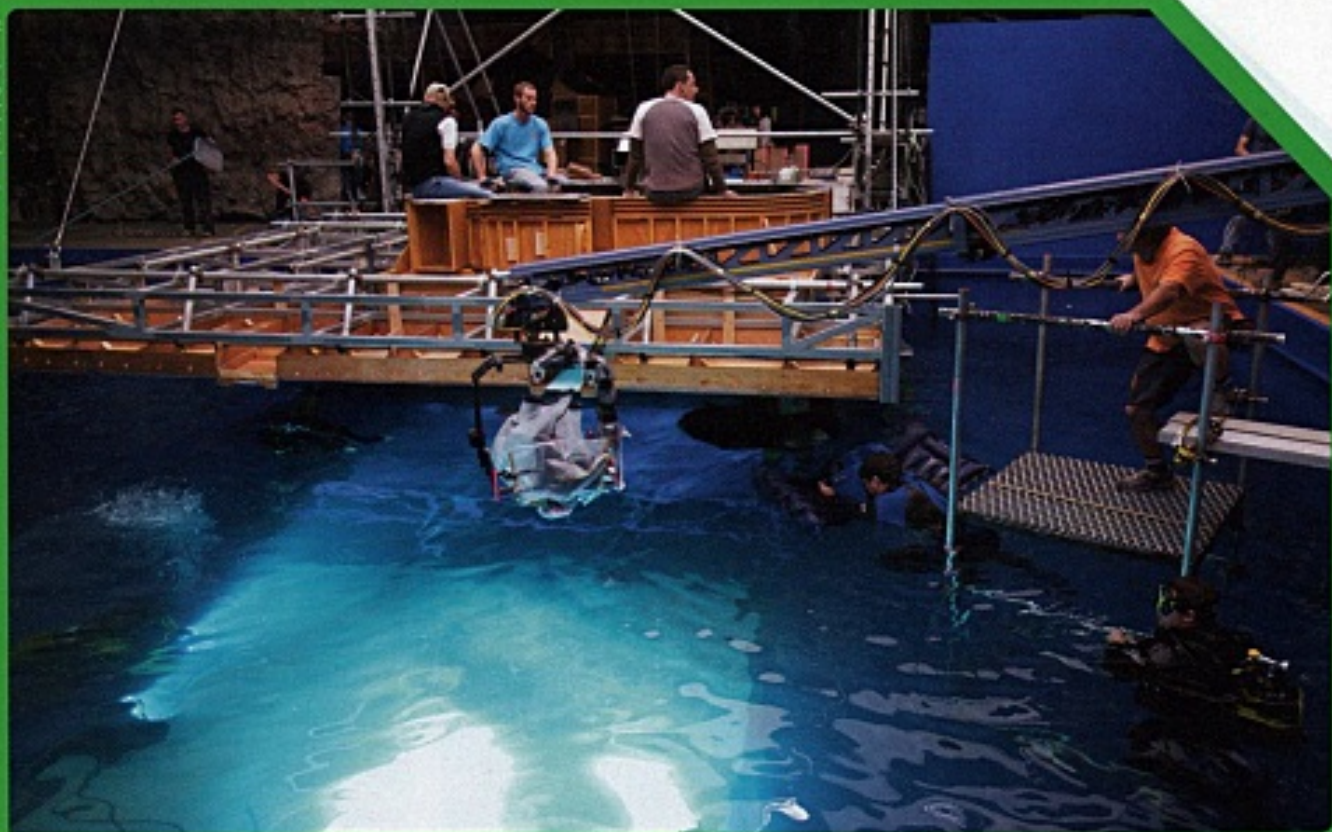


Photo by Ralph Nelson Jr.



A camera crew sets up for some underwater photography in the giant tank on Stage 2 at Fox Studios Australia. The 10-foot-deep tank doubles as a flooded generator room aboard a Trade Federation cruiser in *Star Wars: Episode III*.

Denaria Kee, aide to Passel Argente, awaits instructions from her boss, who is the Magistrate of the Corporate Alliance and a key Separatist leader.

A little too much off the top, barber! Actor Silas Carson adjusts the mouth of the specialized Nute Gunray mask, filled with electronics to provide complete, realistic facial and lip movement. He is helped by (from left) wardrobe standby Amanda Craze, prosthetic make-up technician Sophie Fleming, and chief animatronics engineer Sonny Tilders.

All eyes are drawn to a solitary figure seated at one end of the General's Quarters aboard the Trade Federation cruiser on Stage 7, one of the largest sets built for *Star Wars: Episode II*.



Photo by Ralph Nelson Jr.

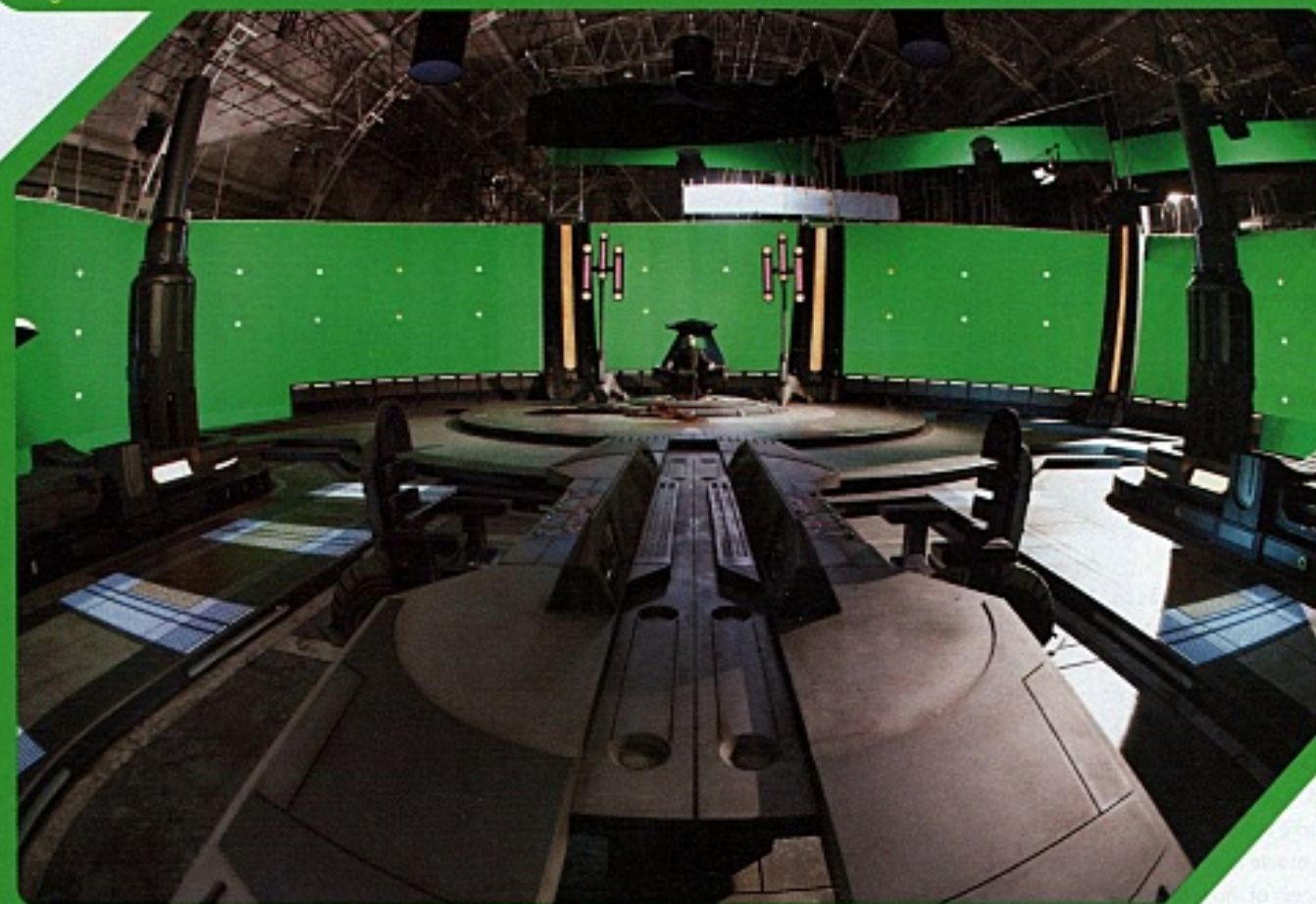


Photo by Ralph Nelson Jr.

PREQUEL UPDATE

STAR N

No Time for Love, Doctor Jones

» Fans have been waiting for years to enjoy *The Adventures of Indiana Jones* on DVD, and at last the movies are available in a four-disc boxed set. To celebrate the release, Lucasfilm and Paramount revealed the DVDs at a special press preview at the American Film Institute campus in Los Angeles. Lucasfilm's Vice President of Marketing Jim Ward acted as master of ceremonies. Producer Frank Marshall discussed the productions, and the films' leading ladies—Karen Allen (Marion Ravenwood), Kate Capshaw (Willie Scott), and Alison Doodly (Elsa Schneider)—recalled their experiences on *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Temple of Doom*, and *Last Crusade*, respectively.

Jim Ward led the THX-enhanced demonstration of the DVDs. "We went back and remixed all of the films into Dolby Digital 5.1, and we believe that at the end of the day the result is a different—and improved—experience from what people have had [on VHS or television] with Indiana Jones." To prove his point, he screened a clip from each movie, demonstrating a flawless image quality.

Frank Marshall was thrilled with the DVD effort. "What I love about DVDs—George was the person who taught me this back on *Raiders*—is that we've always collected behind-the-scenes footage, and now on DVD we have a [place] for it to live. Before that, it was only on public television. Now people actually get to enjoy the making of the movie and understand more about the process of how things are done on a production. I personally think that as you're



Alison Doodly, Kate Capshaw, Harrison Ford, and Karen Allen at the press junket.

From the World of Lucasfilm

EWS 73

by David C. Fein

making a movie, it's much more interesting to have material to watch than to sit in a dark room a year later, watch the movie, and talk about it [for a commentary track]. I think it's great for young filmmakers to see where [the trilogy] came from. That's why I love a DVD project like this."

Working on the films presented Marshall with challenges that would test his ability as a producer. "I think the most challenging was when George handed me the script for *Raiders* and said that we're going to make it for \$20 million. At that time there were peo-

ple who read the script and said that the first sequence alone would cost \$20 million. But there was a certain spirit and way that we went about making the movie. It was a goal to do them in the [speed and efficiency] of the classic B-movie-serial era that had inspired the movies."

It wasn't only future generations that would be inspired by the films. Marshall himself learned from the experience. "I was fortunate enough to do the second-unit directing," he said. "I believe that the job of a second-unit director is to imitate the first-

unit director. Your footage needs to cut in with their footage and match. So what better teacher than Steven Spielberg?"

The sheer scope of the productions was another great educator. "These movies were such a logistical challenge and a production challenge that I continue to learn from them," Marshall said. "Early in my career, I believed I could do anything, and when I think about some of the things that we pulled off, it is amazing."

Shooting the pictures all around the world added to the adventure, both for the



The Women of *Indiana Jones* show off a few of their most memorable costumes.

audience and for the filmmakers. "By the time it came to the third film," said Marshall, "we took out the travel brochures and said, 'Where do we want to go?' These movies were fun, and I think that is part of what the audiences liked, the globetrotting exploits of Indiana Jones. It was one of the things I believe inspired us to do the fourth movie."

Not only would these personal adventures enrich the scope of the films, they were also personally satisfying to the filmmakers. "We had actually come to the AFI dinner honoring Harrison Ford, and while standing backstage, everyone looked at each other and said, 'You know, those were great times. We should do it again.' This was a great departure, because we had decided never to do another one. Our cast rode off into the sunset at the end of the third film, and we said, 'That's great! We're done!'"

For the first time ever, all three of the leading ladies of the Indiana Jones movies graced the stage. The American Film Institute's own heroine, CEO Jean Firstenberg, introduced the actresses after offering some key facts about Indiana Jones and the AFI's 100 Years... 100 Heroes &



Allen and Ford get carried away in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Villains poll. "Indiana Jones came in second as the greatest cinema hero of all time, just behind Atticus Finch (*To Kill a Mockingbird*) and just ahead of James Bond. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was also in our top 100 American films of all time, and three years ago we had the distinct pleasure of presenting our highest honor, the AFI Life Achievement Award, to Harrison Ford."

After the opening remarks, Karen Allen started to reply to her first question when a heckler from stage left suddenly cut her off.

"Bitch, bitch, bitch!" the intruder complained before revealing himself. It was none other than Doctor Jones, Harrison



Ford himself, wearing his character's signature fedora and jacket.

"I just dropped by to say hello," he said. An event that had already seemed enthusiastic became frenzied, and Karen Allen literally fell out of her chair in surprise, while the audience went nuts. Ford remained just long enough to pose with his co-stars before leaving them to continue their Q&A session.

Allen recalled her first impressions of Marion Ravenwood. "When I first read the script, I thought it was [as great as] *Casablanca*, and I just fell in love with Marion. I thought that she was the best character that I had ever read."

Starting with a great character on the page was not enough for Allen, who added small touches to Marion during filming. "I'd be in a scene with Indiana Jones where there wasn't a description of what Marion was doing. I wanted her to always be ready to spring into action, either jumping for the frying pan, or grabbing any large object that she could smack somebody with. I feel that I was given the room to shape her."

Despite her ready-for-anything attitude, Allen wasn't prepared for a particularly grisly shock. "There was a cobra that bit a python, and it died instantly, and Steven took this dead python and threw it into an ice chest for three or four days until the flesh rotted. He then waited for one point in the Well of Souls when Harrison was climbing and I was standing there with my torch going out, and suddenly Harrison hits a snake and onto me falls Steven's dead python! He slithered me! I was covered with snake slime, and I had to scrape it off with my hands. That was my most grotesque moment on the film."

Go Figures

Collectors of vintage *Star Wars* action figures have another essential reference for U.S. Kenner action-figure-related items in *Star Wars Vintage Action Figures—A Guide for Collectors*, written by noted collector John Kelleman. It includes the most comprehensive listing of carded variations, mailers, multipacks, and promotional items ever published, and it presents this data in a highly visual fashion. Despite the sheer density of information, the concise entries make the guide accessible for casual reading.

While more comprehensive than previous resources, the Guide focuses on U.S. Kenner action figures. Kenner's Droids and Ewoks figure lines have been intentionally omitted, and the focus on action figures is so strict that it doesn't cover vehicles or playsets unless they also included figures. Foreign items are included usually only if they were clearly produced by Kenner's American team. Finally, Kelleman provides a very brief overview of some ancillary items (such as the Power of the Force coins) that have been covered in greater detail by online sources. In its coverage of U.S. Kenner action figures, however, the Guide should prove indispensable to vintage collectors.

Star Wars Vintage Action Figures—A Guide for Collectors is available for \$34.95 + S&H only at www.frontbackbooks.com.

—Vic Wertz





Kate Capshaw remembered Willie Scott, the stunning blonde American nightclub singer making her way in Shanghai before winding up on the rollercoaster adventure of a lifetime. "My agent called and wanted me to go in and audition. At the time I was still thinking that I was this New York actress only doing films like *Sophie's Choice*. But I really wanted to meet Steven, so I did it," said Capshaw. Regardless of her concerns, she won the part but still had a unique approach to the film. "Because I really didn't want to do the movie, I didn't really read the script, and so it wasn't until we were in Sri Lanka that I realized that there were snakes and bugs in the film! I mean I really didn't know." Capshaw survived the snakes and bugs and gave us some of the greatest creepy-crawly moments of all of the films.



Capshaw and Ford carry a tune in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

Already a veteran of the action-adventure genre, beautiful Bond girl Alison Doody (*A View to a Kill*) rounds off the series as the Austrian Nazi agent Doctor Elsa Schneider. "I knew it would be an experience of a lifetime. I think every experience is different, and action-adventure is so much fun," she said. As for her most memorable event, "I remember driving the boat and being told by Steven to just drive the boat straight toward him while Harrison hangs on the back. I was driving very fast, and on a nearby pier, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and Frank Marshall were all suddenly waving me to turn, turn, turn! I almost hit the pier! It was extraordinary!"

As for Elsa, Doody had some concerns about her role as the love interest in the film. "I wanted my character to be attractive, sexy, and the counterpoint to Indy, and it was hard for me. I was furious with Sean Connery, because I thought he had my part, because [the story focused on] the father-son relationship."

The question of a new Indiana Jones film inevitably arose, and while none of the actresses could comment on their possible involvement, Allen shared some interesting history. "I was told from the very beginning that they had planned to do three," she said, "and that my character would only be in the first film because the plan was to go backward in time, so I knew I wouldn't be in the other two."

Doody and Ford carry on in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.



With a fourth Indiana Jones movie on the horizon, Allen hopes the good Doctor Jones won't be the only returning character. "I would be delighted to be in the fourth film," she said. "I'm hearing little rumors, but officially I've heard nothing. Time will reveal all."

Allen's Marion Ravenwood has the advantage of being alive at the end of *Raiders*. Not so for Elsa Schneider, but Doody doesn't see her character's demise as an absolute barrier to her return. "Elsa had a twin sister!" she insists. "And she's really good!"

As Good as It Gets

George Lucas is slated to receive the first-ever lifetime achievement award given out by the Visual Effects Society. Lucas will be cited for his contributions to the advancement of the art and science of visual effects through the five *Star Wars* films, the three *Indiana Jones* films, and *Willow*.

VES Executive Director Tom Atkin explained why Lucas was selected for the organization's highest honor. "If it weren't for George Lucas, we wouldn't be here. He has always had a strong vision of how visual effects could contribute to the movies, and the recent steps that he and Lucasfilm have taken to advance the digital filmmaking process continue to take the art of telling stories through visual effects to new heights."

"It's really wonderful to receive this award from such a distinguished and creative organization," said Lucas. Making a nod to ILM, he added, "When we made the first *Star Wars* movie, a group of extremely talented people helped me tell a story in a visually new and exciting way. Since then, the imaginations and artistic abilities of visual effects craftspeople have never ceased to amaze me."

The second annual VES Awards will be held at the Hollywood Palladium on February 18.

Giving as Good as He Gets

On October 20, George Lucas presented an award for outstanding achievement in directing to Ron Howard (*Willow*) at the seventh annual Hollywood Film Festival. Howard directed such notable films as *Backdraft*, *Apollo 13*, and *A Beautiful Mind*.

Solo Disarmed

No, Harrison Ford didn't lose his arm, but in October he elected to undergo surgery on a torn rotator cuff, leaving him in a sling for about a month. The operation was scheduled to coincide with downtime between films, so Ford will have plenty of time to recover before filming for the fourth Indiana Jones movie begins.

—Vic Wertz

STAR SIGHT



SAMUEL L. JACKSON (Mace Windu) may turn to basketball in an upcoming feature, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*. Fresh from his hit film *S.W.A.T.*, Jackson was, according to the industry trade journal, in early talks to star in Paramount Pictures' *Back in the Day*. The story revolves around controversial basketball coach Ken Carter, who, at Richmond High School in California, benched his entire undefeated basketball team when it was revealed that their collective academic performance was under par. He forfeited two important games and made the gym off-limits to his team until they raised their grades. As a result, many of the students went on to receive impressive scholarships. The film, which was scheduled to begin production in fall 2003, was written by Mark Schwann and directed by Thomas Carter (*Save the Last Dance*).



Is there no stopping KEIRA KNIGHTLEY (Sabé)? The young beauty has become a superstar, showing up in *Love Actually*; *Pirates*

of the Caribbean: *The Curse of the Black Pearl*; *Bend It Like Beckham*; and reportedly, *Jurassic Park IV*. Now, according to *Variety*, Knightley has a new role to add to her ever-growing resume: she'll star opposite Adrien Brody (*The Pianist*) in *The Jacket*. The film details the story of a soldier who is convicted of murder and, during his treatment in a mental hospital, believes he is traveling through time.

Knightley will play his love interest, a woman he met as a child and for whom he is searching through his "time travels." Her character helps Brody try to discover whether or not he is actually a murderer. John Maybury (*Love Is the Devil*) will direct from a script written by Marc Rocco and Massy Tadjedin. The film is scheduled for a 2004 release.



LIAM NEESON (Qui-Gon Jinn) is still busy working on *Kinsey*, the film about the famous sex expert, but he is also starring in *Asylum*, according to the Liam Neeson Fansite and *Coming Attractions*. His costar in the "dark romance" will be none other than his wife, Natasha Richardson. Neeson will play a psychiatrist at an insane asylum outside of London. As he dedicates all of his time and energy to his work, his wife becomes listless and strikes up daily conversations with a psychopath. The film is directed by David Mackenzie, fresh from working with Neeson's Padawan, EWAN

MCGREGOR (Obi-Wan Kenobi), in *Young Adam*. *Asylum* is based on the novel of the same name by Patrick McGrath.

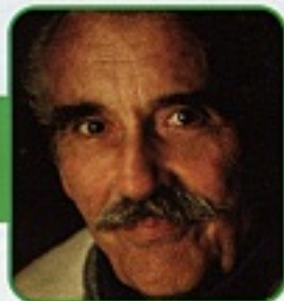


Speaking of McGregor, the famous Scotsman lent his visage to the Scottish dairy industry in an ad campaign promoting the consumption of the white variety of Luke Skywalker's favorite refreshing beverage. The campaign featured the "milk moustache" made famous in the United States by a similar campaign. Other celebrities who lent their upper lips to the dairy industry in autumn 2003 included Sir Sean Connery, Sharleen Spiteri, and Rod Stewart. The slogan for the campaign was "The White Stuff Milk Moustache." Milk. It does a Jedi good.

McGregor's film *Big Fish* for director Tim Burton (*Planet of the Apes*) slipped right out of its original date of November 2003 to a January 2004 nationwide release, with limited screenings in late December 2003 making it eligible for Oscar consideration next February. "When we took an early look at the film, we couldn't have been more excited," said Jeff Blake, President of Worldwide Marketing and Distribution at Columbia TriStar. "We wanted to do what's right for the picture. This way, we'll have lots of time to screen the film in its completed state and have all the time we need to market it properly."

HITINGS 73

by Benjamin Harper



Now for some really important CHRISTOPHER LEE (Count Dooku) news: Empire Online, the web version of the British film magazine *Empire*, posed this question in an August poll: "Which of the following characters would you most like to discover was your grandfather?" The choices were Ming the Merciless (*Flash Gordon*), Professor Xavier (*X-Men*), Marty McFly (*Back to the Future*), George Bailey (*It's a Wonderful Life*) or Saruman (*Lord of the Rings*). Looks like film geeks prefer their grandparents evil: Saruman won with a whopping 39 percent of the vote. That whining, self-pitying George Bailey should have jumped after all—he got only 8 percent of the vote. Professor Xavier came in second place with 30 percent of the vote, followed by Marty McFly, with 15 percent. Ming came in next to last. After seeing how he treats his own children, we can understand why.



Lust, adultery, murder, and jealousy are at the heart of JIMMY SMITS' (Bail Organa) film *Angel*.

Filed in Puerto Rico, the Spanish-language film tells the story of a close-knit family whose relationship begins to fall apart when a mysterious man enters their lives.



Life After Lars: JACK THOMPSON (Clegg Lars) was cast in the upcoming film *The Assassination of Richard Nixon*, starring Sean Penn (*Mystic River*), Naomi Watts (*Le Divorce*) and Don Cheadle (*Ocean's Eleven*). Thompson's character is named, appropriately enough, Jack. The film marks the directorial debut of Niels Mueller, who cowrote the screenplay with Kevin Kennedy.



Stephen King added to the ever-popular vampire genre with his cult hit *Salem's Lot*, released in 1979 and directed by Tobe Hooper (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*). Never content to leave well enough alone, those Hollywood types remade *Salem's Lot* as a 2004 television movie with an all-star cast including Rob Lowe, Donald Sutherland, and

Rutger Hauer. Also starring in the production was CHRISTOPHER KIRBY (senator) from Episode III.



Another Episode III senator, BAI LING, is in just about everything, it seems. First up is *The World of Tomorrow*, a thriller set in New York City in 1939 in which a reporter discovers the mass disappearances of the world's leading scientists. She works to thwart the plot of a mad scientist seemingly bent on world domination. Mwah-hah-hah! Ling's cast listing is appropriately shady—she plays the Mysterious Woman. The film is slated for a 2004 release. Next, who says accidental pregnancy isn't funny? *My Baby's Daddy* details the story of three friends who must face reality when their girlfriends all become pregnant at the same time. Ling costars with Eddie Griffin (*Undercover Brother*), Amy Sedaris (*Strangers With Candy*), and Scott Thompson (*Kids in the Hall*) in this 2004 release. Finally, the busy actress has had time to do the film *Beautiful Country*, set to open in 2003, with Nick Nolte (*Down and Out in Beverly Hills*). The film chronicles the consequences of America's involvement in the Vietnam War. ☺



JUMP TO HYPERSPACE STAR WARS.com

by Pablo Hidalgo, Internet Content Provider
edited by Paul Ens, Director of Lucas Online

The Best of Hyperspace

Even after the conclusion of principal photography on Episode I, the Hyperspace experience continues with behind-the-scenes information exclusively for subscribers. Here are a few more choice selections from this past summer's Set Diary and one of the site's revealing chat sessions. For more information, or to subscribe to Hyperspace for only \$19.95 U.S. per year (available to all countries), visit the website at <http://www.starwars.com/hyperspace/>.

Webcam

During principal photography, the Hyperspace webcam allowed fans a fly-on-the-wall view of the shooting of Episode III in Australia. Now, the well-traveled cam lets members spy on the postproduction work underway at Skywalker Ranch and ILM.



Trisha Biggar (chat of 8/27/03)



Dave Stolte: Hello, Trisha. What have the challenges been in Padmé's costumes this time around with the prosthetic belly?

Trisha Biggar: Basically, the challenges were in certain scenes to disguise the fact that she was pregnant, to enable her to fulfill her duty as a Senator without anyone being aware of the belly.

spi77rit: Which actors seemed to enjoy their costumes the most?

Trisha Biggar: Jimmy Smits and Ian McDiarmid both seemed to have enjoyed wearing their costumes more in this episode. They both have considerably more costumes this time around and could almost be

ying with Padmé for the most extensive wardrobe.

Brother Jacopus: How did you go about putting together the costume for the Expanded Universe character that is to appear in the film? What were the challenges for costuming a character that already has a pre-determined look?

Trisha Biggar: There is a precedent in terms of style and color for this character's costume that we have to bear in mind when developing it. What works in a comic book, for example, would not necessarily work on an actor. The action the character undergoes in fiction is different from the action shot by the cameras, and the costume has to accommodate this fact.



Set Diary—Excerpts from Pablo Hidalgo's Journal on the Episode III Set

The Best Starpilot in the Galaxy

August 11, 2003

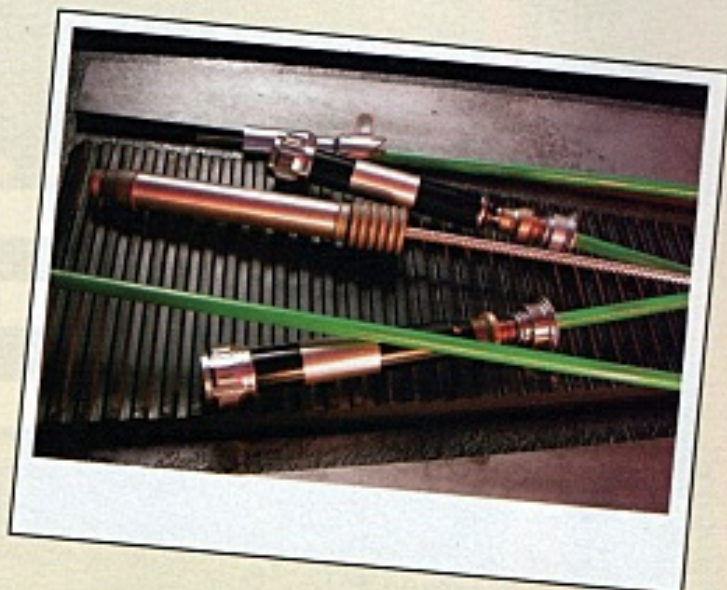
"He was the best starpilot in the galaxy," Obi-Wan Kenobi said to Luke in *A New Hope*, describing Anakin's skills. While I'm not about to take anything Old Ben says at face value anymore, he seems to be telling the truth for once. Today's shooting concentrated on the piloting skills of our Jedi heroes.

The same gimbal-mounted starfighter cockpit used on Friday serves as both Kenobi's and Skywalker's vessel—the color and detail differentiations will be added in post-production along with the rest of the fuselage for these tight shots. First up today, Hayden Christensen sits in the cramped quarters, wearing the familiar piloting headband first seen in Episode II.

The circular track above the cockpit supports the swiveling light that makes it appear as though his ship is twisting through space. A bank of red-gelled lights indicates incoming enemy fire. Brighter orange lights are for near-miss explosions.

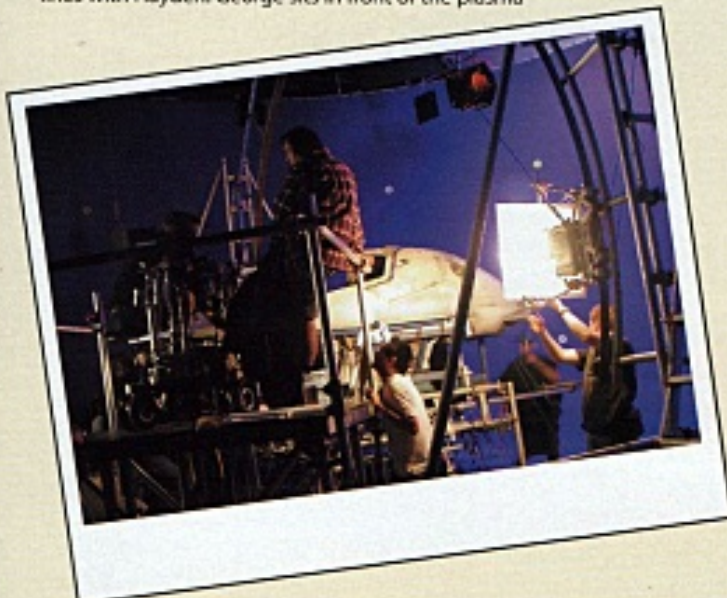
By the time I catch up with filming this morning, the scripted dialogue has already been shot and George Lucas is shooting ad-libbing and wild lines with Hayden. George sits in front of the plasma

action is quite different—this is much more in the adventure-serial vein than the fight found later in the movie. In some ways, it's a bit anticlimactic watching it unfold out of sequence. On the other hand, the swordplay is elegant and energetic and fun to watch.



We're on one of the few full sets remaining in the production, and even this one is awash in greenscreen. It's a multilevel locale with raised platforms and sunken floor sections. The room itself will contain expansive platforms to each side of the main floor, but since none of the action spills over to those sections, they're not constructed. Once again, a foam-core and cardboard model from the Art Department provides the visual aid required to fill in the green in the mind's eye.

Though this locale is new to the *Star Wars* films, it has architectural elements that remind me of several classic environments. The trapezoidal doorframe reminds me of the bulkheads found on Imperial Star Destroyers. The illuminated stairway brings to mind the carbon-freezing chamber on Cloud City. The flower-shaped duty stations with their control-panel "petals" look much like similar structures in the Emperor's throne room. The color and worn finish of this huge room give it a distinct identity. Though the set has no ceiling, projected lighting on the floor gives me an idea of what the ceiling will look like should an angle require ILM to put one in. ☺



screens, calling out descriptions of the battle and other background chatter to prompt Hayden's reactions.

"Okay, you've got fire coming in. Look to your droid! Now we'll do the little piece where you watch the droid do the—here comes a bad guy from your right! He's over the top of your ship now," George calls out.

A Common Foe

September 3, 2003

What a difference a day makes—though Hayden Christensen and Ewan McGregor are again wielding lightsabers, their objectives are completely different. Anakin and Obi-Wan are partners again, fighting side-by-side, united against a common foe. We've jumped back in time to a scene from earlier in the film, before the schism that will tear Master and Apprentice apart. The tone of this





RETURN

GEN ADM

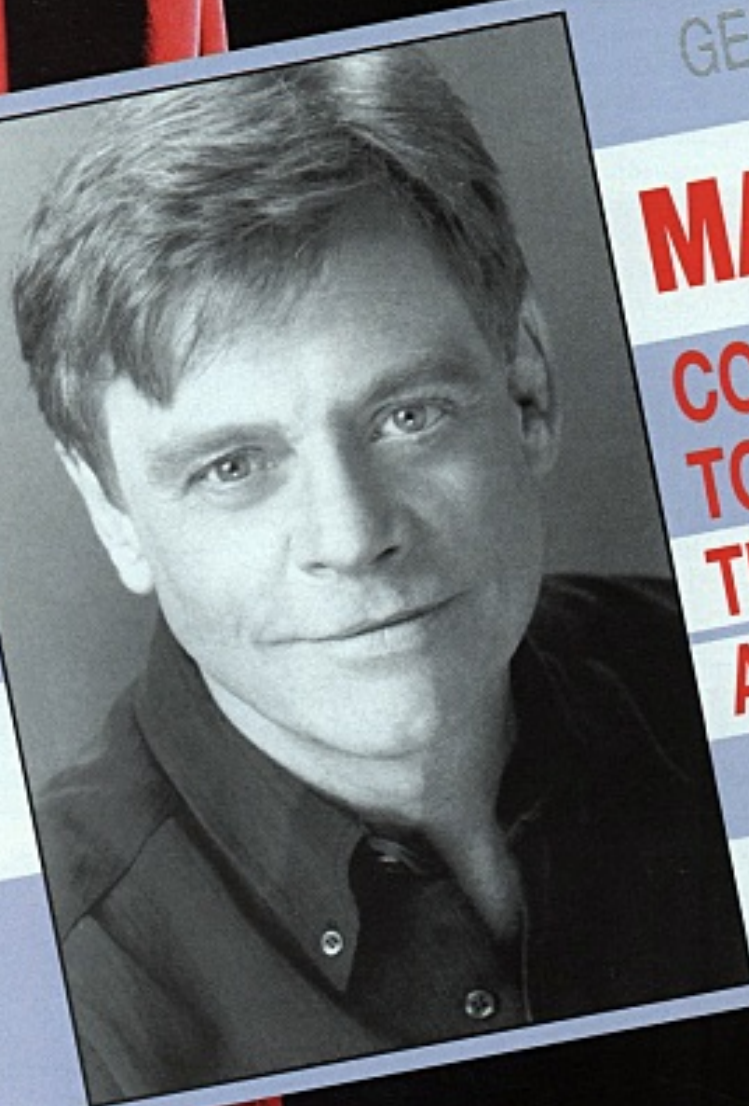
ADULT

MARK HAMILL

**COMES BACK
TO BROADWAY,
THE BIG SCREEN,
AND PRIME TIME**

G16 SEC4

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by Dave Gross & Jenny Scott



OF THE JEDI

It was a long time ago that Mark Hamill last spoke to *Insider*, but *Star Wars* fans have been following his multifarious career ever since the fall of the Empire.

Onstage Hamill has played the Elephant Man, Mozart, and vaudevillian Tony Hart—a role that earned him a Drama Desk nomination for Best Actor in a Musical. Video-game players know him as Colonel Christopher Blair from the *Wing Commander* series and as the voice of everyone's favorite mutant in *X2: Wolverine's Revenge*—to say nothing of his return as the voice of Luke Skywalker in LucasArts' *Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*. A veteran voice actor whose earliest credits include the animated *Jeannie*, *The New Scooby-Doo Movies*, and the cult-classic *Wizards*, Hamill has cornered the market on supervillains, giving voices to such evildoers as the Gargoyle, Hobgoblin, and most famously Batman's arch-enemy, The Joker.

Moving from film to stage to TV to sound studio is one of the ways Hamill keeps his performances fresh, because each medium provides its own challenge. "They all are different in the way you would imagine them to be," he says. "Television is just like movies, but it's 10 times faster. You're learning tomorrow's scenes while you're doing the scenes today. It's just like soaps. I love doing soaps! You've got your heart pumping a mile a minute because things could go wrong. You've got all these really good stage actors doing this arch material and trying to make it real. I just love to be [working in] whatever medium I'm in, to really enjoy the advantages of that."

These days, Hamill is enjoying the advantages of three different media. On Broadway he recently starred opposite Polly Bergen (*Cape Fear*, *Cry-Baby*) in *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*. In late February, Creative Light Entertainment releases the DVD of Hamill's directorial debut, *Comic Book: The Movie*, in which he also stars. And the versatile performer also cowrote, produced, and performed in *The Wrong Coast*, an animated satire series set to air on AMC later in 2004.

After three grueling weeks of previews for *Six Dance Lessons* and a recent recording session for Cartoon Network, it's not surprising that the Mark Hamill who answers the phone sounds less like Luke Skywalker and more like Elan Sleazebaggano. Despite the hoarseness, Hamill seems full of energy, and his enthusiasm only grows as he talks about his many projects. He says, "This period for me is one of the most fruitful, enjoyable creative highs I've had."

On Old Broadway

In October, Hamill assumed the role of dance instructor Michael Minetti in *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks* in Broadway's Belasco Theatre following a successful run in Coconut Grove, Fla., where he starred with Rue McClanahan (*The Golden Girls*). The role is Hamill's first Broadway appearance since 1988's *The Nerd*. "It was completely unexpected," he says. "I didn't plan it. I read the script, and it's rare that the characters jump off the page the way they did. It brought to mind *The Gin Game* or *Sleuth* or any of the theatrical pieces that they call 'two-handers.' It's wonderfully rich in its appeal, and very funny. I mean *instantly* funny. By page six, I said, 'Oh my gosh, I have to do this.'"

Part of the appeal was that Minetti's character is not typical leading-man material. "The guy's showing up to give dance lessons," says Hamill, "and he's got anger-management issues. He's an opinionated sort of wiseacre New Yorker: cynical, bitter and angry. He's also a liar. I read the first 10 pages and said, 'This guy is such a creep!' The audience is not only going to not like him, but will probably want to reach out and strangle him. In the theater, they can do that!"

Another aspect of the Minetti character has unique appeal for an actor, like Hamill, who values variety. "He's a frustrated Broadway actor who never really made the big time, and you can bet that in every dance he teaches, he's



Michael Minetti (Mark Hamill) becomes a new character with each dance he teaches Lily Harrison (Polly Bergen) in *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*.

a different character. He's not just doing the foxtrot; he's Frank Sinatra in one of those *Robin and the Seven Hoods* movies. When he's doing the tango, he's surging with Latin sexuality. And he's Mickey Rooney in the swing. I love being sort of a chameleon."

Opposite Hamill's dance instructor is Polly Bergen's Lily Harrison. On the surface, she appears to be the complete opposite of Minetti. "She's a Baptist minister's wife and very set in her ways, well-to-do," explains Hamill. "He's very resentful of what she has. He says about her apartment, 'These ugly high-rises may ruin the view for the rest of us, but they're sure great from the inside!' She's in St. Petersburg; he's in Clearwater. He's at the beach but not on the beach. It's like being close to paradise, but no cigar if you're on the wrong side."

Hamill recalls a conversation with native Floridian Richard Alfieri, the playwright, about how the setting inspired the story: "He was with

his mother once at a big hotel and saw all these middle-aged dance instructors and a sea of senior citizens, and he was intrigued. 'What goes on here?' Well, a lot of people want to fill up their spare time and just get out and interact with other people. It's a social thing. It's a health thing. It's an exercise thing."

Apparently it's a contagious thing, too, according to Hamill. "Dancing is fun—really, a lot of fun," he says. "I can't believe I'm saying that, given that I went through hell trying to learn how to do it all."

Broadway veteran Kay Cole is the choreographer for *Dance Lessons*. While Hamill is no stranger to action-oriented roles, he learned that choreographers can be even more daunting than stunt coordinators—or directors. "You can argue with a director over interpretation," says Hamill. "With dance it's precise. It is just unbelievably difficult and frustrating until you finally get it right, and then it's exhilarating, like jumping out of an airplane or surfing, or just riding your bike when your dad lets go and you're doing it on your own with no training wheels. It's wonderful."

Dancing was hard enough, but the real difficulty came when it was time for Hamill to teach his partner to dance while keeping his own steps straight. "Keep in mind that I'm teaching everything upside down and backward," he says. "When I'm saying, 'Right foot back slow,' I'm really doing left foot forward slow. It's very difficult."

"Backstage one time in Florida, I just momentarily panicked. I was ready to make an entrance and said, 'Oh my god, I can't remember how to foxtrot.' So I turned around in a panic and said, 'I just forgot how to foxtrot. I forgot how to foxtrot!'"

Hamill's dresser came to the rescue with soothing reassurances, and the show went on... with just a small hitch. "I stepped on Rue's toes twice, and I couldn't switch over, so I just started doing it wrong but with shallow steps so I didn't hurt her. But I learned fast; I never did that again."

Just to be sure, McClanahan took steps of her own. "Rue used to be a dance instructor," says Hamill, "so in a way it was good for me and bad for me, because she was really leading, and I didn't mind, and no one could tell."

With McClanahan's departure, however, Hamill could no longer depend on her training. "They told me, 'We're going to kick it up a notch for Broadway. We're going to make the dances more complex. You have to now take that mantle of responsibility.'"

When Polly Bergen took over for McClanahan for the Broadway run, Hamill had adjustments to make. "They are really different," says Hamill. "I think Rue had more of a pronounced Southern aristocracy about her. Polly doesn't emphasize that as much, and yet there's a more fragile kind of vulnerability to Polly's portrayal. Rue is a much more formidable lady."

Each actress had something different to offer her costar. "Rue is very traditional in the sense that when she finds something that works, that's the way she likes to freeze it," says Hamill. "Not that she's intractable—I don't want to give you the wrong idea. Polly is willing to scat and jazz. If you lock eyes with her and she feels like you want to play, she'll play instead of saying, 'What were you doing that for? I thought we were going to do this.' She's got a little-girl quality that I find just absolutely appealing. It's effortless. You see the spirit of this 16-year-old in this elegant, elderly, but still beautiful woman. It plays well because I'm so crass. I'm playing Groucho to her Margaret Dumont."

Hamill hints that *Star Wars* fans who came to see *Dance Lessons* may also have witnessed a few ghosts—especially if they sat in the

second balcony of the Belasco Theatre, which is said to be haunted. The theater itself has a long history of inexplicable events, according to Hamill, who says he's had some rather strange experiences while performing there.

"I've never had so many unexplained bad-luck things happen," says Hamill. "That includes the music box that I play for each of the dances turning on when it's not supposed to, or not going on when it is supposed to."

Hamill recalls that on another occasion, deafening feedback from the stage microphones stopped the play almost before it had begun. The technicians could not identify the problem. "All these experts said, 'I don't know what that is, and I've never experienced that in my 37 years in the business.'"

He says the most alarming mishap occurred on opening night. "In the last five minutes of the play, when there are unexpected turns, there was a great disturbance in the audience. I managed to talk louder and faster because we were only a page and a half from finishing, but it was crucial exposition that clearly nobody was hearing or paying attention to." Eventually, the performers learned that a man in the audience had collapsed. Luckily, there was literally a doctor in the house, and the show resumed twenty minutes later. Unfortunately, the distraction had come at the worst possible time. Hamill sighs. "We finished the play without the momentum."

With critics from the *New York Times* and other influential media in the audience that night, Hamill says, "The producers were just ashen-faced, of course."

"Later we found out he didn't have a heart attack," says Hamill. "Ironically—to quote a line from the play—he was laughing so hard that he choked on a lozenge or candy that he had, and it blocked his windpipe."

Despite some bad luck, Hamill says, "Opening night was like a theatrical dream come true. It was at Sardi's. I started inviting people I didn't even know. I wanted Kofi Annan and the pope to come. Actually, the pope was a joke, but Kofi Annan has an assistant who is one of our prop people part-time. I said, 'Oh, ask him to come opening night!' That would be so awesome if we could get Kofi Annan. I also hoped for Keith Richards."

While no pontiff, secretary general, or guitar legend appeared in the audience that night, at least one long-time friend made the evening special. "People always ask me, 'Do you have any friends from *Star Wars*?' " says Hamill. "Well, yeah, they're all my friends—they're all friends I haven't seen in 15 years because everybody has a life." The exception, he says, is Peter Kohn, who met Hamill on the set of *Star Wars*. "He was 18 and a production assistant who was not scheduled to go to Tunisia, but at the last minute he was asked to because he spoke French. He was the closest to my age on the crew, so we bonded and became buddies. I was friends with him before any of the cast arrived."

These days, Kohn works as an assistant director on films like *Air Force One* and *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. "He's worked on some of Harrison Ford's movies. He'll relay messages to me from him," Hamill laughs. Recently, Kohn included Hamill's wife, Marilou, and their daughter, Chelsea, along with their two dogs in a walk-by role in *The Manchurian Candidate*. Hamill says, "Look, here I'm trying to make this play run, and these guys are getting A-list movies without even trying."

Hamill finds live performances far more invigorating than screen

roles. "The audience really is such an integral part of the experience. It's not like assembly-line candy bars. I love Hershey bars, but if you come to the Belasco Theatre, we're going to handcraft a confection of your choice right before your eyes every night."

Unfortunately, just before press time, *Insider* learned from playbill.com that *Dance Lessons* closed on Broadway on November 23. The fourth casualty of a difficult theatrical season, the show ended when Polly Bergen could not return on a regular basis after missing several previous performances due to a leg injury.

However, despite the mixed reviews, the future looks bright for *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*. Universal Studios has purchased the movie rights, and a German production has already started. "I thought I was originating a brand-new play," says Hamill. "This sounds like a Howard Johnson's franchise going up!"

Comic Book Guy

This February, Hamill makes his directorial debut with the release of the DVD of *Comic Book: The Movie*. The movie, a mockumentary about fanatic comic collectors, came into being in the time-honored Hollywood way: accidentally. Initially, Hamill had approached the producers at Creative Light Entertainment to pitch a different movie





altogether: *The Black Pearl*, a 1997 Dark Horse Comics miniseries that Hamill cowrote and later adapted for the screen.

"*The Black Pearl* was out of their price range," Hamill recalls, "even for a low-budget movie. But then they told me about the [documentary] they did for *Star Trek*, where [William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy] talk about *Star Trek*—*Mind Meld*."

Right away Hamill could see where they were going with the idea, and he admits that a similar movie based on *Star Wars* would be fun. "There are so many anecdotes about making those movies that no one's ever talked about, those only [the cast and crew] remember. I mean, no one was up on the glacier with me [in *The Empire Strikes Back*], not even Harrison or Carrie."

Hamill directs a few fellow fans at Comic-Con International (above). The cast of *Comic Book: The Movie* includes Tom Kenny, Daran Norris, Lori Alan, Roger Rose, Debi Derryberry, Jess Harnell, Mark Hamill, and Jan Cummings (below right).



Still, Hamill was itching to work on a project that was more than just a stroll down Memory Lane. "People have to understand, I shy away from *Star Wars* because they don't need me anymore," Hamill explains. "It's fantastic what it's done and where it's gone. I totally understand the impulse. There's a universal quality that unites people who love something so much that they can't explain it rationally."

Hamill admits that although he "follows" *Star Wars* and sees all the movies, he isn't exactly a *Star Wars* fanatic. In fact, his son now owns Hamill's *Star Wars* collection. "I didn't have to pass it on—he just appropriated it," says Hamill. "My obsessions are more like the Rolling Stones and the Marx Brothers and Golden Age comic books."

So Hamill made the CLE producers a counteroffer: "Let's do something new and fun, [something that will] riff on all my projects, not just [the *Star Wars*] movies." His idea: a mock documentary that he says is "along the lines of what Christopher Guest (*Best in Show*) and Rob Reiner (*This Is Spinal Tap*) and Woody Allen (*Take the Money and Run*) have done."

"I've always loved the documentary form," says Hamill. "I love to watch documentaries, but [they can be] too much like school," he jokes. "You have to do all this research, and I want the fun but not any of the responsibility! If I can do a documentary where I can make up all the facts, I'll feel much better about it."

The first order of business was to find suitable subject matter. Hamill recalls thinking, "What could I use as a background that would stand up to this very minimal budget?" He finally chose the world of comic book fandom as his setting and secured permission from Comic-Con International to shoot the movie there.

In addition to directing *Comic Book: The Movie*, Hamill stars in it, playing a high-school teacher who is also a comic-book historian. "What happens in the movie," he says, "is that a studio is going to revamp and make relevant this old, nostalgic character. [So] he becomes Codename Courage instead of Commander Courage. And they get rid of the boy sidekick, Liberty Lad, and give Courage a sexy girl in a jumpsuit, and that's Liberty Lass (Donna D'Errico)."

Besides Hamill and D'Errico, the movie features "this wonderfully eclectic, oddball cast," says Hamill, including Roger Rose, Tom Kenny,



Daran Norris, Laura Nativio, and James Arnold Taylor, and includes interviews with Kevin Smith, Bruce Campbell, Jonathan Winters, Sid Caesar, and Hugh Hefner. It also boasts what Hamill calls "some of the best voiceover actors in the business. This is a bumper crop." He adds, "It's the *Mad Mad Mad Mad World* of voiceover actors. We have everybody from *SpongeBob SquarePants* and the *Animaniacs* to *Pinky and the Brain* to *Jimmy Neutron* to *Winnie the Pooh* and the *Tasmanian Devil*—you name it. Between Billy West and Maurice Lamarch alone, we have practically everybody from *Futurama*."

Hamill says *Comic Book: The Movie* had an advantage over other recent ensemble mockumentaries. "[It] wasn't as scripted as a Christopher Guest movie. When Eugene Levy and [Guest] sit down, they write out the script, all the beats, shot by shot, like a conventional script, but don't put the dialogue in. They tailor it to the rep company they have with Fred Willard and Catherine O'Hara and all those other brilliant people."

Working without a script, as Hamill's cast did, gave the process "a certain dangerous quality," he says. "We were filming alternates where we said, 'Well, if this happens, then let's do this scene, but if that happens, let's go again and do it where you say this instead of that.' So there's a raggedness. We did it on the fly."

Despite the inevitable humor created by this spontaneity, Hamill describes the movie as a very personal one. "All the references, the biographical material—it's all skewed, based on my real life. It's sort of like *Earth Mark*. Remember *Earth 1/Earth 2* [DC Comics' alternate worlds]?" Hamill himself is something of a comics fanatic, a self-described "giant geek" who "knows how to finesse his obsessions a little and pass in the normal world."

"I started reading all the underground comics when I was in high school," he says. "R. Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, and [so on]. I could tell they were influenced by the *Mad* comics, and [so] I wanted to get all the *Mad* comics in their original form. That's when I first hooked into the history, finding out about EC [Entertaining Comics], and when I first became entranced with the Kefauver [Senate] committee, which tried to pin comics to juvenile delinquency."

Someday, admits Hamill, he'd like to do a rock-and-roll comic-book movie à la John Waters' *Cry-Baby*. Meanwhile, he's proud of what he was able to accomplish with the slender budget for *Comic Book: The Movie*. "It's really sort of the model of economy that George used on



the original *Star Wars*," he muses, "where you didn't have the money to do X, Y, and Z, so you looked at the big picture and said, 'What do we need to sell this and make people fill in the rest with their imagination?' It's wonderful, and I'm lucky to have worked with so many wonderful people who have taught me so much."

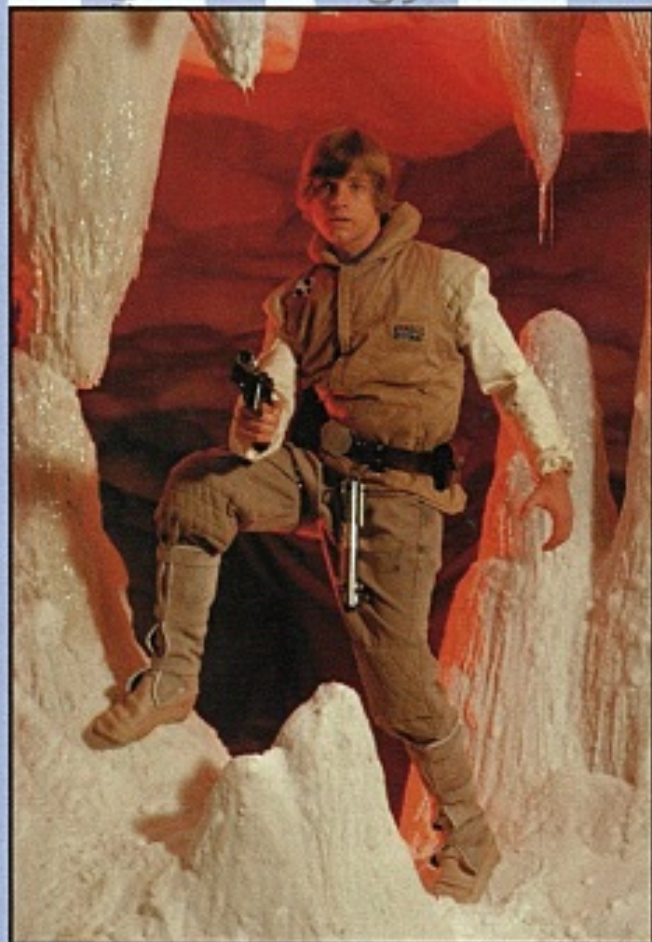
A Million Voices

Hamill's fans also know him as the voice of The Joker on the WB's *Batman: The Animated Series*, a role he has played for 12 years. The star says there are definite advantages to voice work. "With voiceover, they don't care what you look like," he explains. "You don't have to shave. You don't have to memorize lines—you read your lines. You can sit down if you want, [though] with Joker I always stand up because I find there is an energy I had in physically trying to become him."

Even though audiences never see voice actors on screen, Hamill often finds himself adopting the physical mannerisms of his characters during recording sessions. "When I did *Scrooge* [1988's *Mark & Brian*

Hamill made time to promote his new movie at his booth at Comic-Con (above). Veteran voice actor Billy West (*Futurama*, *The Ren & Stimpy Show*) joins forces with Hamill for *Comic Book: The Movie* (below left). For more on the movie, go to comicbookthemovie.com.





Christmas Special," he says, "I didn't even do it intentionally, but they said, 'Your hand became palsied, and you had sort of an old tremor.'"

"I love not being seen," Hamill continues, "because then you can just use your voice like a magician. [If] someone says to me, 'No, he's about a hundred pounds heavier,'" Hamill says, continuing in a very deep voice: "Well, I'm going to figure out a way to make my voice sound heavier."

The *Batman* series will soon be ending to make way for a new series that will focus on younger incarnations of the characters, with a new voice cast. But Hamill has no regrets. In fact, he admits, "It's kind of a relief. It was one of the longest runs I've ever had—12 years. The hardest thing was keeping up the quality. You overstay your welcome [and] it becomes harder and harder to be original. I applaud [the WB] for trying to find a way to reinvigorate the franchise."

Besides, Hamill has already begun voiceover work on a new animated show: *The Wrong Coast*, a half-hour series premiering on AMC in 2004. *The Wrong Coast* combines stop-motion animation with computer effects, and Hamill describes it as "a satire of those magazine entertainment shows such as *Access Hollywood* and *Entertainment Tonight*. You have to see it to believe it."

Hamill says he's not interested in competing with the shock tactics of more outrageous television fare and seems especially proud that *The Wrong Coast* is suitable viewing for all ages. "It's a family-friendly satire," he says. "I wanted [to do] a show where [younger viewers] can stay in the room instead of [their parents saying], 'Oh, boy, *The Wrong Coast* is on, kids. Get out of the room!'"

While celebrity impressions will play a part in *The Wrong Coast*, Hamill points out that he leaves the impersonations to the experts. "I do a halfway decent Woody Allen, but [we] have Maurice Lamarche [*Futurama*], who's indistinguishable from the real guy." Ever the chameleon, Hamill still performs more than his share of roles, not just the lead. "I did a lot of the character voices and incidental people in various accents and sped up and slowed down so you wouldn't know it's me," he says.

As is often the case in voice performance, Hamill records his performances without the benefit of having the other actors in the room. "I've not met the cast yet," he says, "and I've done nine shows. It is strange, but it's not strange because you do animation in all different ways. Disney, for instance, never has you do group records. For TV maybe, but mostly they like solo [recording sessions]. I asked Jonathan Taylor Thomas [Young Simba in *The Lion King*], 'How did you like working with James Earl Jones?' And he says, 'Oh, I never met him.' *The Lion King*! I mean that's very disillusioning."

Hamill says that as a director, he likes to do things differently. "To me, as a voiceover director and director of video games and a direct-to-video movie and [TV] episodes, I find that I love the actors being together because they have a chemistry together and spur each other on. My view is that if you ad-lib something funnier [than what is scripted], I will be more than happy to take credit for your witty substitute. That's the Jay Ward way. That's why *Rocky and Bullwinkle* was so brilliant. Aside from having brilliant writers, they had brilliant actors who sometimes put a twist or a turn on what was already there, and the egos were such that they said, 'Oh, that's better. Say that.'"

This collaborative impulse informs Hamill's stage acting as well: "I'm able to [ad lib] with my author. I honor the text, but in certain instances, I've said, 'How about this or that?' Now, 90 percent of the time he says no, but that means that the two or three things you do change, you feel like, 'See? Now that's going to be in the Samuel French edition forever and ever.' And that's the difference between replacing and originating a role."

The Circle Is Now Complete

Looking back on his many roles, Hamill has a hard time picking one favorite. "There's something in all of them," he says. "I loved Luke. I loved the fact that he was so callow and came full circle to become someone who was a full grownup person. He's fated, of course, I think, to be lonely."

He recalls thinking he would one day play an older Luke Skywalker when discussing the once-planned Episodes VII–IX with George Lucas. "I knew they were going to be about other characters with a possibility of my doing a cameo in the ninth one. I would imagine that [Luke] would model his life after Obi-Wan. I mean, the shock of finding out his best girl is his sister would be enough alone to send him to the monastery," Hamill laughs. "You could see him whittling lightsaber holders out in the desert of Tatooine somewhere. I think he's reached a place where that aspect of physical love is in perspective for him. I say this, but people tell me I'm married to that hottie [Mara Jade]."

"The model who plays her is just adorable," he says of Mara-model Shannon Baksa McRandle. "I think it's funny. Leave it to Lucasfilm to get you a love interest 10 years after your job's over."

When the Special Editions were released in 1997, Mark Hamill had not seen the *Star Wars* films in a theater since they first generated around-the-block lines in the late 1970s and early 1980s. His children

had seen their father's fight against the Empire only on video. "To tell you the truth," he says, "I didn't think it was necessary to see the re-release at the time. But then my kids of course said, 'Are you insane?' I said, 'We've seen it a million times.' They said, 'Yeah, but not big and loud and in the dark without stopping or scanning back and pausing.' Plus the fact that [Lucas had] tweaked them all, special-effects-wise."

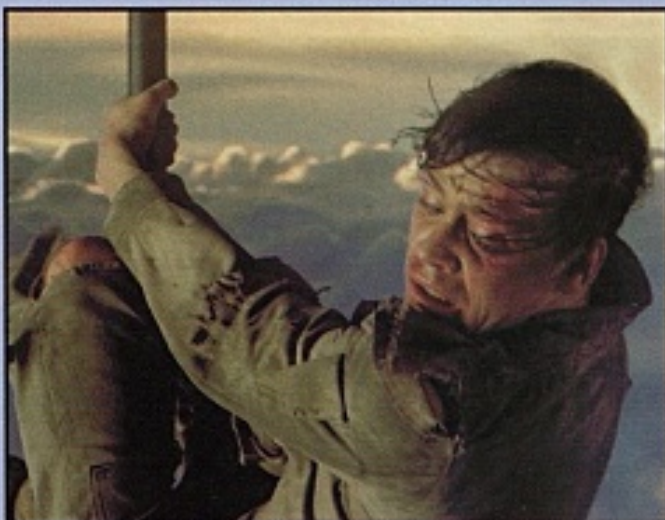
Beyond the ability to add digital effects to movies made two decades earlier, Hamill admires another benefit Lucas gained from the phenomenal success of *Star Wars*. "It's so much fun for George," says Hamill. "I think that's the thing I'm most entranced with, the unprecedented autonomy of one man to be the writer and the director and—are you sitting down?—the studio! Holy moley! So these aren't sort of the movies he wants or compromises; these are exactly what he wants. Even Stanley Kubrick, as much as he was known for wanting to shoot and shoot and shoot so he had so many choices—his dream was to edit a movie for 10 years—I don't think even he could claim to have the kind of autonomy that George has. Maybe Spielberg does, too, but at least at Dreamworks he's got partners; he's got Mr. Geffen and Mr. Katzenberg. Who's George's boss? Nobody! It's got to be fun."

While that sort of autonomy is appealing, it is "an awesome responsibility," in Hamill's view—and he should know, having gone the hyphenate route as producer-director-actor on several projects. The experience has given him even more sympathy for the pressure Lucas must feel. "He's got no one to shift the blame to if things go wrong, but so far so good for him. Hopefully, when *Comic Book: The Movie* comes out, people will give me a chance to take more steps in that direction. I'd love to do small, comic movies about real people."

If money were no object, Hamill would like to tackle a couple of period projects, including a movie version of *The Black Pearl*, currently retitled *Dark Diamond*. The other is a similarly personal piece, one he began writing in the late 1980s while researching his role in *Harrison 'n Hart*. "There's a story I have about the ghost of a little turn-of-the-century boy who was in the theater. He doesn't know that he's a ghost and mistakes a divorcing modern-day Manhattan couple for the ghosts of his parents and doesn't realize that in doing what he's doing, something astonishing happens. It's a fantasy in the mode of *Miracle on 34th Street*. It's a heart-warming ghost story that's scary in parts for all the right reasons and sort of Dickensian."

If Hamill seems less than eager to embrace the celebrity of his most famous role, he says it's because he wants to ensure he can continue to do what he likes best: change character. "I've never understood why people are so anxious to do things like I'm doing right now [a phone interview]. Do people believe that the more they find out about me personally—what my politics are or what my private life is—the less of a cipher I will become?"

He adds, "[Acting] is just a job. [Real life] isn't show business. It can be, if you want, but I don't." ☺



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Sketches courtesy of www.brianlaw.com

In 1985, long before the *Star Wars: Clone Wars* animated micro-series and the establishment of the Expanded Universe, Lucasfilm ventured into the world of animation with the *Droids* and *Ewoks Adventure Hour*, two half-hour programs that chronicled the further adventures of some of the beloved characters from the original *Star Wars* trilogy. The Canadian company Nelvana, working closely with Lucasfilm, brought these cartoons to life (as previously covered, along with a complete episode guide, in *Star Wars Insider* #27). This was not the first time, however, that Nelvana had worked with Lucasfilm on an animated *Star Wars* project.

christmas in the stars

Partners Michael Hirsh, Patrick Loubert, and Clive Smith established Nelvana in Toronto in 1971, but they never intended it to be a dedicated animation company. Instead, they hoped to establish a film company in a country that didn't really have a film industry. After a few years of producing live-action and animated films, as well as short programs for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the trio soon realized that animation was becoming their specialty. In 1975, they set out to produce their first fully animated half-hour special, *A Cosmic Christmas*. Released in December 1977, *A Cosmic Christmas* achieved critical acclaim around the world. It also caught the attention

A COSMIC CHRISTMAS



and

By Shane Turgeon

Droids & Ewoks

Adventure Hour Revisited

of Lucasfilm, which had recently experienced a little success of its own.

The following year, Lucasfilm and Canadian director David Acomb were looking for a company to produce a 10-minute animated short for the now-infamous "Star Wars Holiday Special," which was to air on Thanksgiving. "At the time, [Lucasfilm] was determined not to work with the standard Hollywood purveyors of animation," recalls Michael Hirsh. "They wanted to be able to choose an independent company. We got a call in early 1978 from Lucasfilm asking us to send a copy of *A Cosmic Christmas* and anything else we were working on. So we did that and [were then] invited to come and meet with George himself and get a sense of the project."

Clive Smith remembers being "bloody thrilled" about the opportunity to work on the *Star Wars* short. "It was a great project, and [Lucas] was really, really good to work with. He gave us a script, something like a 10-page outline that was called *The Story of the Faithful Wookiee*. Then Frank Nissen—my right-hand animator/friend/visualizer and co-director in those days—and I worked like crazy, and, I think, in about 10 days we did the entire storyboard. I don't know how many panels it would have been, but it was a very detailed board, and I took that down to Lucasfilm."

For *The Story of the Faithful Wookiee*, Nelvana produced a detailed and colorful cartoon that fit perfectly in the *Star Wars* universe.





Droids and the Prequel Trilogies

While no direct connection has ever been established between the *Droids* series and the first two installments of the Prequel Trilogy, they do share several interesting "connections."

Perhaps the most significant of these comes in "A Race to the Finish," in

which speeder racers Thall Joben and Jord Dusat take their speeder, the White Witch, to the Boonta Speeder Races, which is also the name of the Podrace that young Anakin wins in *The Phantom Menace*. Another Podrace theme is echoed in the episode "The Roon Games" when a two-man announcer team simultaneously comments on the Games in two different languages, much like the two-headed Podrace announcer does during Anakin's big race on Tatooine. From a vehicle perspective, many *Droids* characters can be seen riding in Podracers that bear a striking resemblance to those used by the Galactic Senate. Also, in the episode "The Lost Prince," Jarrin Tosh, who becomes the droids' second master in the series, drives a single-wheeled speeder that is very similar in design to the halfire droids seen in *Attack of the Clones*.

Centered around a mystic talisman that has adverse affects on both Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, the story delves deep into the issues of trust and friendship. It has become widely recognized not only for introducing the bounty hunter Boba Fett, but also for perhaps being the only well-received segment of the "Holiday Special."

Nelvana's work on *The Story of the Faithful Wookiee* further established the company as a major player in animation. Shortly thereafter, the company produced three more successful, seasonally themed specials and a full-length picture called *Rock and Rule*. Also, for the first time in its history, Nelvana began producing several animated and live-action television series such as the *Edison Twins*, *Inspector Gadget*, and *Strawberry Shortcake*. These projects gave Nelvana considerable experience in series production. It was a market in which it hadn't anticipated working, but one that would prove to be its lifeblood for years to come. As a result, when Lucasfilm decided to make two new animated shows based on the Ewoks, and C-3PO and R2-D2, it was Nelvana that got the call.



droid factory

The *Droids and Ewoks Adventure Hour* was, in part, intended to maintain audience interest in the *Star Wars* saga after *Return of the Jedi*, which came out in 1983. First airing on ABC in September

1985—and coinciding with two Kenner toy lines—the initial series consisted of 13 episodes of *Ewoks*, 13 episodes of *Droids*, and one *Droids* special

entitled the "The Great Heep"—which was produced concurrently with the series. The *Droids* cartoons take place 15 years before the events of *Star Wars: A New Hope* and center around the galactic travels of C-3PO and R2-D2 before they meet Luke Skywalker.

While most television series are fixed upon a core group of characters in a central location, almost every

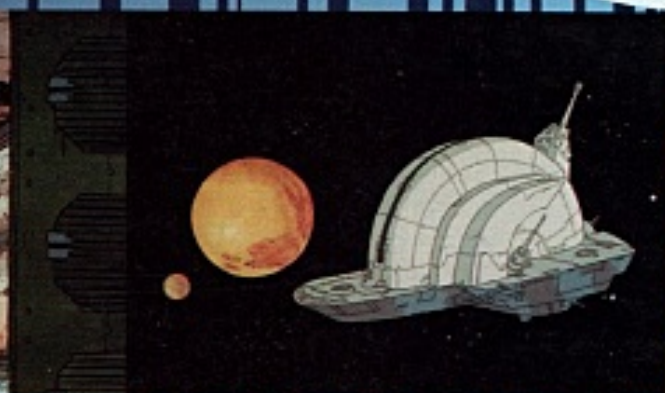


episode of *Droids* occurred on a new planet, and after every four episodes, C-3PO and R2-D2 left their current masters in search of new ones. Because of its complex nature, developing the *Droids* series proved to be quite a difficult process.

"The challenge in *Droids* was that you essentially had the *Star Wars* story to bring forward without Luke, Leia, Darth Vader, and Han Solo," recalls Michael Hirsh.

"It was a lot of work," says Patrick Loubert, "and I remember we tried to talk George out of that. We really wanted more *Star Wars* characters, because I thought we could have done really well with

The challenge in *Droids* was that you essentially had the *Star Wars* story to bring forward without Luke, Leia, Darth Vader, and Han Solo.



them." He adds, "George was adamant in that he didn't want to expose those characters at that time, and he wanted just the droids."

As a result, one of the first tasks that Nelvana's design team faced was creating the new characters that would serve as C-3PO and R2-D2's masters, as well as the multitude of villains they would inevitably face. While Lucasfilm supervised and approved everything, Nelvana employees had a great deal of creative control in this area and created characters such as Thall Joben, Jord Dusat, Uncle Gundy, Jan Tosh, Kez Iban, and Mungo Baobab, as well as new villains such as the Fromm Gang, Kybo Ren, Admiral Screed, and Gaff. While most of the main characters from the *Star Wars* trilogy were off-limits for the *Droids* series, there were several notable guest appearances by other characters, such as Boba Fett in "A Race to the Finish," Sy Snootles and the Max Rebo band in "The Lost Prince," and IG-88 in "The New King."

With the design of the new characters complete, the next challenge facing Nelvana was to write 13 episodes and a special in a relatively short period of time. To meet this requirement, Nelvana needed several different writers, who would come from a variety of sources. Peter

Sauder, one of Nelvana's top in-house writers, and Ben Burt, George Lucas' sound designer, wrote or co-wrote the majority of the *Droids* episodes along with Joe Johnston (another Lucasfilm employee) and Los Angeles-based writers such as Gordon Kent, Michael Reaves, and Steven Wright.

With many writers each creating episodes that took place on different worlds, a huge design department was needed to visualize their ideas. "There was a pool of designers at the studio [who became specialists]," recalls Clive Smith. "Certain people were really good at machines and believable mechanical stuff, and there were others who were really [strong with] characters, while other designers [excelled] at backgrounds and locations." Visually, the hard work of the design team and Director Ken Stephenson paid off. Every episode of the *Droids* series is bright and vibrant and truly captures the essence of the *Star Wars* universe. Unfortunately, this high degree of quality had a drawback, as well.

The amount of work that went into creating new worlds and adventures every week was staggering compared to most Saturday morning

cartoons of the time and consequently, the *Droids* series became very expensive to produce. In the end, the mammoth amount of work that went into its production, and the resulting costs, proved to be unfeasible, and *Droids* was cancelled after only one season.

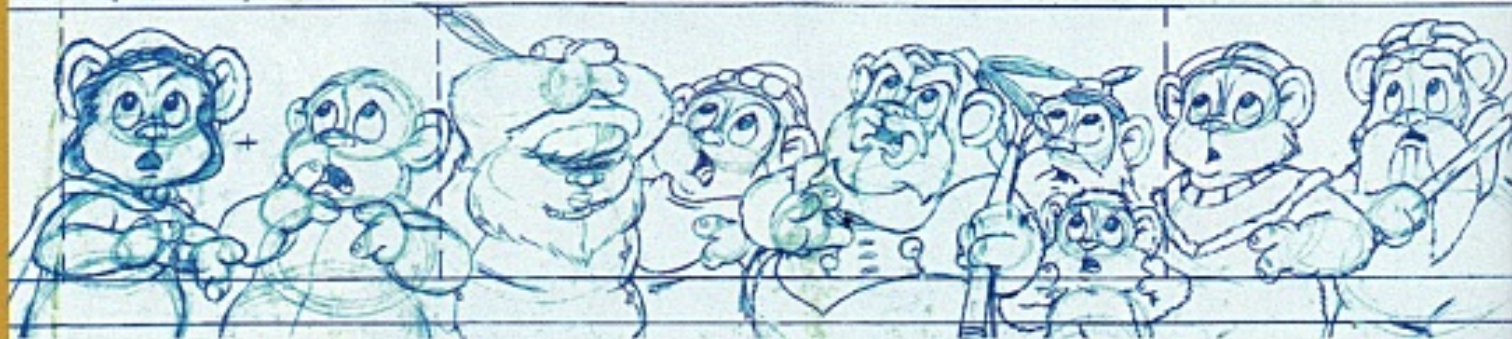
the ewoks strike back

Fortunately, because of the release of *Return of the Jedi* a year before, developing the *Ewoks* series wasn't quite so complex. Taking place before the events of *Jedi*, the *Ewoks* series follows Wicket and his friends Kneesaa, Teebo, and Latara throughout many adventures on Endor. Ray Jafelice, who directed the first season of *Ewoks*, remembers one particular event that helped the design team to understand the moon of Endor. "One of the first things [Lucasfilm] did was send us to Skywalker Ranch near San Francisco and take us on a day trip to Muir Woods, which is this huge redwood forest in California where actual Endor footage was shot. So just walking around that park was awe-inspiring. Plus, we had the movie to look at, as well as the stage and set designs."

With much of the basic design work already established, the Nelvana team simply had to adapt it to work in an animated fashion. This resulted in the creation of colorful environments like the Ewok Village, the floating trees, and the swamps, which were home to the Ewoks' archenemies, the Duloks. Adaptation was something that also needed to be done with many of the Ewoks who appeared in the movies. Wicket, Teebo, Chief Chirpa, Logray, and many of the other animated Ewok characters first appeared in *Return of the Jedi*, but they needed more identifiable personas for the cartoon. Nelvana redesigned these characters to have not only more distinguishable features but also individual personalities and character traits.

Of course, these characters needed to have adventures, and for this Lucasfilm suggested writers Paul Dini and Bob Carrau. Together they wrote all 13 episodes of the first season. Dini and Carrau weren't Nelvana employees, but by working in tandem with the Nelvana crew, an effective team was formed. As a result, after the initial 13-episode run, the *Ewoks* series was renewed for another half-season on ABC.

Sketch courtesy of www.brianlensay.com



The Story of the Faithful Wookiee has become widely recognized for introducing the bounty hunter **Boba Fett**.

Even Ewoks Get the Blues

Did you know that famous musicians composed the opening title themes for both *Droids* and *Ewoks*? The *Droids* title theme was the result of collaboration between former Police drummer Stewart Copeland and blues bassist Derek Holt. While in Hawaii, legendary blues guitarist Taj Mahal recorded the simple yet catchy opening theme for the first season of *Ewoks*. Unfortunately, neither theme has been released on CD, although Spanish versions were released on a promotional 45 by EMI in Spain in 1986. While blues icon Long John Baldry might not have contributed musically to the *Droids* and *Ewoks* *Adventure Hour*, his unmistakable voice can be heard as the Great Heep in the *Droids* special of the same name. He also provided additional voices for the first season of the *Ewoks*.

When the second season of *Ewoks* aired in the fall of 1986, fans noticed changes, which were implemented when a new team of designers from Lucasfilm came on board the project after completion of the first season. Twenty-two new episodes were created for Season Two, but of these, only the last episode, "Battle for the Sunstar," was full-length. The rest were shortened to allow multiple stories to be told in a half-hour block. The second season also featured a new opening theme and a

Nelvana redesigned these characters to have not only more distinguishable features but also individual personalities and character traits.



substantial amount of design changes to many of the main characters. Despite the differences, Paul Dini and Bob Carrau continued to write most of the episodes, and many of the Nelvana employees who worked on the first season were onboard for the second, including Dale Schott, who replaced Unit Director Ray Jafelice as director.

After the flood

While the *Droids* and *Ewoks* programs aired for a relatively short time, they attracted millions of viewers. In 1994, the series experienced a resurgence when the Sci-Fi Channel re-ran the programs, thus reintroducing them to the many *Star Wars* fans who grew up with the series, while also reaching an entirely new generation. This renewed popularity also sparked a new level of interest from collectors hoping to track down the remaining pre-production material Nelvana used to make not only the *Droids* and *Ewoks Adventure Hour* but also the "Star Wars Holiday Special."

For years, speculation has run rampant throughout the collecting community as to what ultimately happened to the material that went into the making of the *Star Wars* animated projects. Animation cels from the last four episodes of *Droids* (which featured the character Mungo Baobab) and cels from the second season of *Ewoks* are readily available on the secondary market. However, locating material from the "Holiday Special," the early *Droids* episodes, or the first season of *Ewoks* has been daunting for many collectors.

One rumor suggests that the material was destroyed when a fire tore through a Nelvana warehouse. In fact, there was no fire, but Patrick Loubert clearly remembers a flood that occurred one stormy Toronto evening. "I remember working over the weekend. All the material was below ground level, and the water started to leak into the basement area, and I came in and [saw that] there were actually things floating around in it. We saved what we could, but we lost a lot of stuff."

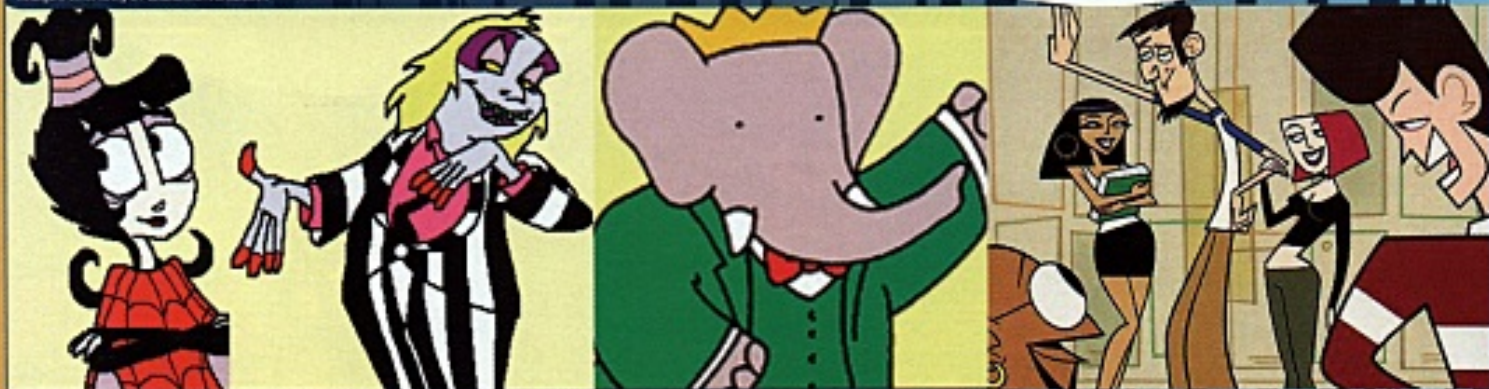
Fortunately, at the time of the flood, the pre-production material from all three of the *Star Wars* projects had long since left Nelvana's

possession, Lucasfilm ultimately holds the rights to these properties, and thus most of the items were sent to the company shortly after the projects were completed. It was there that everything remained until the late 1980s when Lucasfilm entered into a contract with Royal Animated Art to sell and distribute most of these items to the secondary market.

Nelvana became a supplier [of animation] to ABC at a time when networks were quite discriminating about who they dealt with, and we became the only Canadian supplier to the major networks.



Images courtesy of www.nelvana.com



Joe Cesaro, owner of Sunday Funnies in Chatsworth, California, acted as a distributor for Royal Animated Art for many years and acquired everything that was available from the "Holiday Special" and episodes 9-13 of *Droids* and the second season of *Ewoks*. Upon approval from Lucasfilm, Sunday Funnies also had the right to produce limited-edition serigraph cels (seri-cels) and made four *Droids* and two *Ewoks* seri-cels specifically for the collectors market. All of these items are available for sale through Sunday Funnies, which has essentially become the curator of much of the original production material from some of Nelvana's finest productions.

The success of the *Droids* and *Ewoks* Adventure Hour was another important turning point in Nelvana's growth as a company. "It was a very significant time for us," says Clive Smith. "For us to be associated with people such as George [Lucas] was good for everybody. It made us feel like we were part of the industry. Also, from the outside, I'm sure people looking at the company were impressed, so I think it was very important that we made those kinds of connections. It certainly helped us in the early days."

Michael Hirsh points out that because of their work on the two programs, "Nelvana became a supplier [of animation] to ABC at a

time when networks were quite discriminating about who they dealt with, and we became the only Canadian supplier to the major networks." With their newfound recognition, Nelvana went on to produce programs such as *Care Bears* and *Beetlejuice* and soon discovered great success in adapting classic children's stories such as *Babar*, *Rupert*, and *Franklin*.

In September 2000, Canadian broadcasting conglomerate Corus Entertainment bought Nelvana, and the studio continues to be one of the world's top producers of animation. It recently produced cult favorites *Clone High* and *Undergrads*, and is currently working on popular animated programs such as *Medabots*, *Beyblade*, and Alicia Silverstone's *Braceface*. Although the three original founders of Nelvana are no longer involved with the company, the legacy they built lives on—with both *Star Wars* fans and animation fans around the world who have come to expect nothing but the best from the name Nelvana. 🍌

Related Links

<http://www.nelvana.com/>

<http://www.sundayfunniesllc.com/>



Droids and Ewoks—The Collectibles

In recent years, collectibles from the *Droids* and *Ewoks* Adventure Hour have become hotter than the blade of a lightsaber. The following is just a taste of some of the most popular *Droids* and *Ewoks* collectibles from around the world.

The Artwork: As with most popular animated programs, the animation cels, sketches and pre-production material from the *Droids* and *Ewoks* Adventure Hour have become very collectible. Pencil sketches and cels without original backgrounds can be affordable entry-level collectibles, with prices ranging from \$25 to \$100, while full production runs that include a cel, original background, layouts, storyboards, and sketches can fetch between \$800 and \$1,500.

The Videos: J2 Communications and CBS Fox released selected episodes of *Droids* and *Ewoks* on VHS. In 1990, J2 initially released two 23-minute tapes containing one episode each. Soon after, they released two "Special Double Length Edition" volumes, which contain two episodes per tape. In 1996, Fox Home Video released one new *Droids* and one new *Ewoks* tape in a clamshell case with three re-edited episodes. Several additional episodes of *Droids* and *Ewoks* were released in the United Kingdom in PAL format, including two promotional tapes from British dairy producer Dairylea. Currently, there are no plans to release the series on DVD.

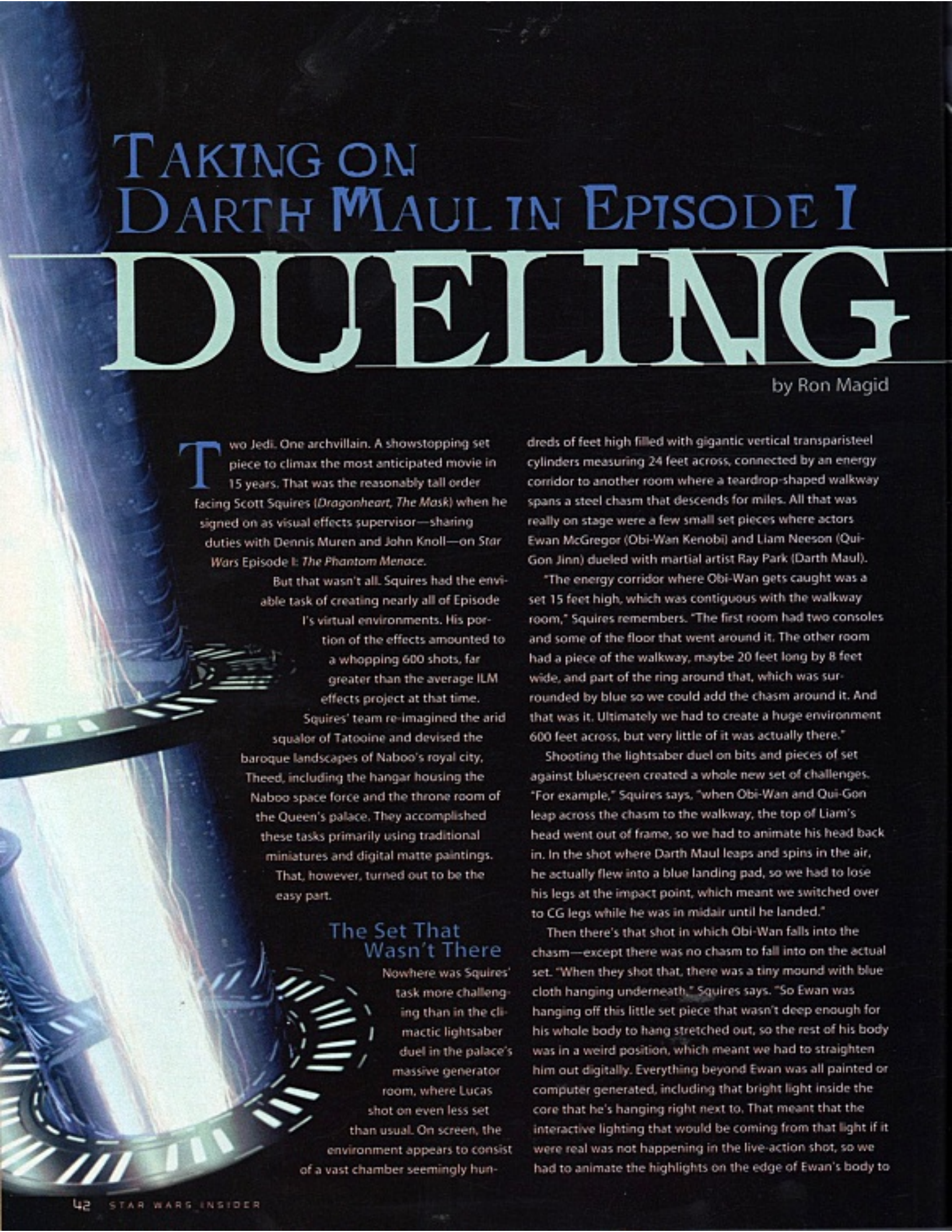
The Comics: In 1985, Marvel subsidiary Star Comics released comics based on the *Droids* and *Ewoks* adventures. The *Droids* series lasted for eight issues and furthered the adventures of C-3PO and R2-D2, but it did not feature characters from the cartoon series. The *Ewoks* series ran for 14 issues and followed Wicket, Teebo, and Kneesaa, as well as many supporting characters from the cartoons throughout their mystical adventures on Endor. Today, these comics sell for between \$2 and \$10 depending on the issue number and condition.

The Toys: In 1985 Kenner released two new lines of *Star Wars* toys to coincide with the *Droids* and *Ewoks* cartoons, and these are easily the most sought-after collectibles from the shows. The *Droids* series consists of eight new figures, redecorated versions of C-3PO and R2-D2, repackaged versions of Boba Fett and an A-Wing Pilot, and three vehicles. The *Ewoks* line included six new figures, but no new vehicles or playsets. Interest in the *Droids* and *Ewoks* has increased dramatically in recent years, and prices vary greatly between different characters, and loose and packaged items.

A second series of new figures from both *Droids* and *Ewoks* was planned for release in 1986, but was cancelled before it went into production. Today, the unproduced *Droids* and *Ewoks* prototypes are highly desired by many collectors, and comprehensive documentation of these prototypes can be found on the *Star Wars* Collectors Archive at <http://www.toysrus.com/images-droids.html>.

International Collectibles: Some of the most intriguing *Droids* and *Ewoks* collectibles come from a variety of countries around the world. Fans in the UK were treated to several exclusive storybooks and coloring books, rolls of wallpaper, and, perhaps most interestingly, a *Droids* video game for the Commodore 64 computer system. Exclusive *Ewoks* puzzles were released in France, but most of the truly unique European collectibles appeared in Spain. They included trading cards, a *Droids* block puzzle, a *Droids* board game, and sticker sets.

Portions of the *Droids* toy line were released in Canada and Brazil with exclusive, generic-style packaging, and only the Brazilian company Glasslite released the infamous second-series Vlix figure. While the *Ewoks* line was not released in Brazil, it was in Canada, again with a unique, generic package design. Only the four Dufok figures were released in this way, while Wicket and Logray were available only as a two-pack through the 1985 Sears Canada Christmas catalogue.



TAKING ON DARTH MAUL IN EPISODE I DUELING

by Ron Magid

Two Jedi. One archvillain. A showstopping set piece to climax the most anticipated movie in 15 years. That was the reasonably tall order facing Scott Squires (*Dragonheart*, *The Mask*) when he signed on as visual effects supervisor—sharing duties with Dennis Muren and John Knoll—on *Star Wars* Episode I: *The Phantom Menace*.

But that wasn't all. Squires had the enviable task of creating nearly all of Episode I's virtual environments. His portion of the effects amounted to a whopping 600 shots, far greater than the average ILM effects project at that time.

Squires' team re-imagined the arid squalor of Tatooine and devised the baroque landscapes of Naboo's royal city, Theed, including the hangar housing the Naboo space force and the throne room of the Queen's palace. They accomplished these tasks primarily using traditional miniatures and digital matte paintings. That, however, turned out to be the easy part.

The Set That Wasn't There

Nowhere was Squires' task more challenging than in the climactic lightsaber duel in the palace's massive generator room, where Lucas shot on even less set than usual. On screen, the environment appears to consist of a vast chamber seemingly hun-

dreds of feet high filled with gigantic vertical transparisteel cylinders measuring 24 feet across, connected by an energy corridor to another room where a teardrop-shaped walkway spans a steel chasm that descends for miles. All that was really on stage were a few small set pieces where actors Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan Kenobi) and Liam Neeson (Qui-Gon Jinn) dueled with martial artist Ray Park (Darth Maul).

"The energy corridor where Obi-Wan gets caught was a set 15 feet high, which was contiguous with the walkway room," Squires remembers. "The first room had two consoles and some of the floor that went around it. The other room had a piece of the walkway, maybe 20 feet long by 8 feet wide, and part of the ring around that, which was surrounded by blue so we could add the chasm around it. And that was it. Ultimately we had to create a huge environment 600 feet across, but very little of it was actually there."

Shooting the lightsaber duel on bits and pieces of set against bluescreen created a whole new set of challenges. "For example," Squires says, "when Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon leap across the chasm to the walkway, the top of Liam's head went out of frame, so we had to animate his head back in. In the shot where Darth Maul leaps and spins in the air, he actually flew into a blue landing pad, so we had to lose his legs at the impact point, which meant we switched over to CG legs while he was in midair until he landed."

Then there's that shot in which Obi-Wan falls into the chasm—except there was no chasm to fall into on the actual set. "When they shot that, there was a tiny mound with blue cloth hanging underneath," Squires says. "So Ewan was hanging off this little set piece that wasn't deep enough for his whole body to hang stretched out, so the rest of his body was in a weird position, which meant we had to straighten him out digitally. Everything beyond Ewan was all painted or computer generated, including that bright light inside the core that he's hanging right next to. That meant that the interactive lighting that would be coming from that light if it were real was not happening in the live-action shot, so we had to animate the highlights on the edge of Ewan's body to

JEDI



Visual Effects Supervisors Scott Squires, John Knoll, and Dennis Muren.

match the light we added in the CG chasm. Although there were a number of scenes where we had to go in and basically animate a highlight on the actors to match to the real set environment, this was one of the trickier sequences."

Digital Do-Overs

There were further complications once shooting was over. "Most of the sets we worked on—the Queen's palace and courtyard, the hangar sequence, the hallways, the generator room—were built with just a little bit of headroom up above,



which meant not only following the blueprints but matching what they actually built," says Squires. "In some cases, there were considerable deviations from the designs or even the blueprints versus what ended up on the screen. The Jedi battle sequence was probably one of the least-designed environments ahead of time—and originally, when we were planning the sequence with [art directors] Doug Chiang and David Nakabayashi—we wanted a much more elaborate, particle-type of system inside those huge glass tubes blowing out the lens. But after they shot that scene with some super-bright interactive lights, and after we'd actually finished that sequence, George took a look at it as a whole and said, 'Well, the light sprayed too much.' Because of that change in look and style, we ended up redoing all the wide and medium shots and remov-

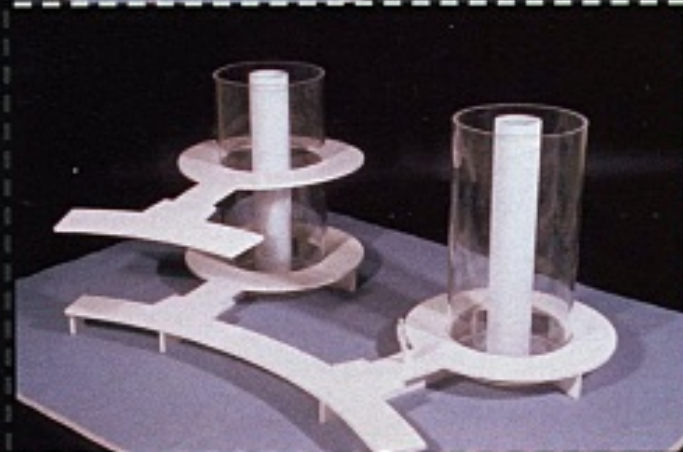
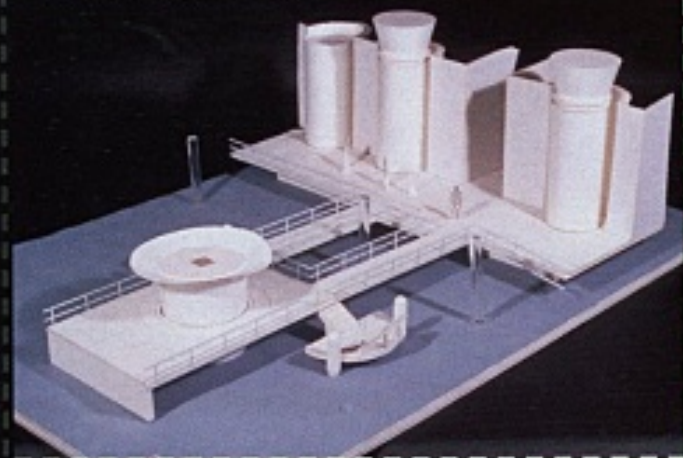
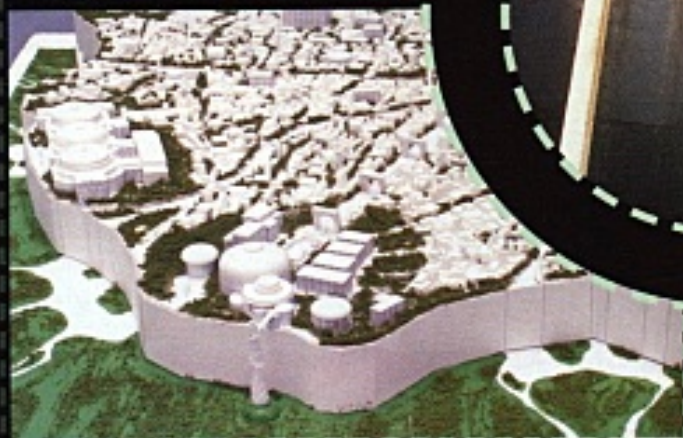
ing those lights from the live action to make it match into the new design. We actually did a number of those scenes two and three times, often rotoscoping (animating over live-action) the actors out of the walkway when it wasn't working. But if you look at the close-up shots, there's still a lot of light contamination going on."

At least those amazing shots of the three actors fighting each other were all done in camera, right?

Wrong.

According to Squires, "They were each shot independently, and we combined them. Also, in order

Left: Unpainted concept models of Theed buildings on Naboo including the power generator and generator core room. Right: Stunt Coordinator Nick Gillard and Ewan McGregor next to the nozzle in the melting pit on Flight Shed 1 Stage at Leavesden Studios.



In the stunt shots, the actors just had the lightsaber handles or little stubs.



Left Center: Darth Maul leaps backward off the control bay, followed closely by Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn, as they continue their fight in the Theed Power Generator Pit on B Stage at Leavesden Studios. Lower Left: Stunt Coordinator Nick Gillard, Liam Neeson, and Assistant Stunt Coordinator Andreas Petrides rehearse a fight sequence while at Leavesden Studios.

to make the fight more dynamic, we moved the actors tighter together to make their connections more obvious, like when Darth Maul kicks Obi-Wan a couple of times in the face. Well, they didn't actually connect, and that was evident in the shot, so we had to split Ewan out from his set, push him over, and do some paintwork shadowing on his face to create the impact of the foot. A handful of shots were done with stunt doubles, so we had to do face replacements. There are also a number of cases where they had trampo-

lines or springboards or wires, so those all had to be removed after the fact as well."

Painting with Light

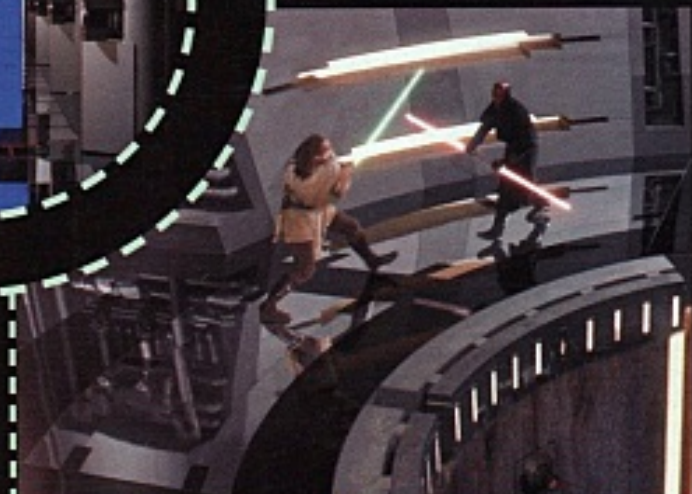
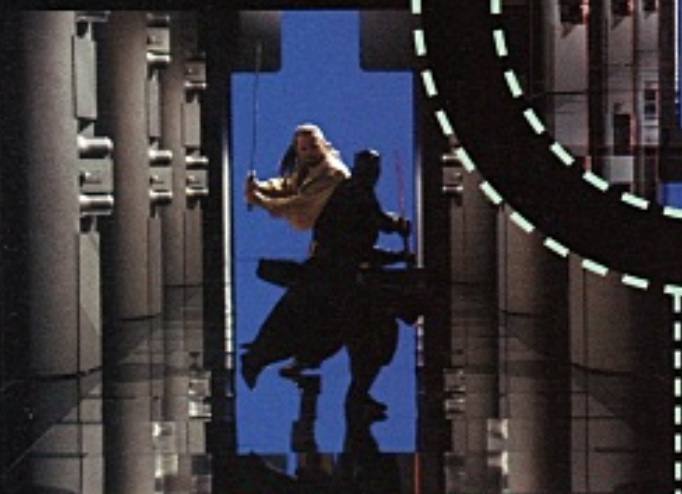
Ironically, the lightsabers, including Darth Maul's keen double-bladed weapon, nearly wrought more havoc on the digital backgrounds than they did on the characters. "There were painted aluminum tubes sticking out of the lightsabers, and we'd use those as guides to roto-scope the entire motion-blurred action, just like on the originals, to give a little bit of flicker and some slight shimmer to the edges, and the glow," Squires says. "However, we ran into problems with aluminum tubes once the actors got into their lightsaber battles toward the end of the production. The guys, especially Ewan and Ray, would end up hitting their weapons so forcefully that the aluminum tubes would bend! That meant that

part of the actual prop was sticking out beyond the lightsaber beam and possibly even covering some of the set. So we had to paint the bent parts out; otherwise we'd end up either with a bent lightsaber—which would look a little bit odd—or we'd have a straight, glowing lightsaber with this little metal thing sticking out of its side, which we didn't think would look good. Also, in the stunt shots, the actors just had the lightsaber handles or little stubs, which meant we'd have to guesstimate where the beams were and what their length was. Sometimes we had to kick shots back to the Roto department and say, 'Well, it's looking a little long there. . . .'

The result was one of the best action sequences in any *Star Wars* film, precisely because it was so

acrobatic, which made the challenges for Squires' team so immense—especially when it came to creating backgrounds that didn't upstage the drama. "We had to make the environment real enough that it wouldn't draw your attention away from that," Squires says. "We were concerned because of the CG floor, so we had to add reflections of the actors. Then we'd break up the reflection pattern so it wasn't just a smooth reflection—it actually had scuff marks just like the real sets."

Qui-Gon Jinn and Darth Maul fight down the Theed Power Generator energy beam hallway, as a series of deadly rays go on and off every minute or so. After Darth Maul has killed Qui-Gon Jinn, the Dark Lord continues his fight with the young Jedi Obi-Wan Kenobi at the end of the energy beam hallway on Flight Shed 1 Stage at Leavesden Studios.



We had to make the environment real enough that it wouldn't draw your attention away from [the drama].



Bottom Right: In the hangar room, Stunt Coordinator Nick Gillard helps Ewan McGregor run through a droid fight sequence, while First Assistant Director (2nd Unit) Nick Heckstall-Smith looks on.

Aftermath

The painstaking diligence of Squires' team set a new standard of excellence, creating a lightsaber duel amid a synthetic environment that was more than just pixel deep, forever expanding the ability of cinema to take the audience to undreamed-of realms. Ironically, it was a bit off the beaten path for Squires, who normally supervises animated characters like those in *The Mask* and

Dragonheart. "It was a little bit different from some of the past things I've done," Squires admits, "but I like to think of myself as being able to handle any of those types of roles."

Certainly his work in Episode I proves that Scott Squires can handle anything the imagination of George Lucas can throw at him. 🕹

by Rich Handley

RADIO DAYS

REVISITING THE *STAR WARS* RADIO DRAMAS

"A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, there came a time of revolution, when Rebels united to challenge a tyrannical Empire. . . ."

—Opening narration, *Star Wars* radio dramas

"If you missed the 13-part radio series, you haven't heard the whole story," Brian Daley wrote in his introduction to the *Star Wars: National Public Radio Dramatization* script. Indeed he was right, for the two hours comprising the original *Star Wars* film were only a fraction of the total tale.

Nobody could have predicted the overwhelming response to *Star Wars* in 1977. The film soon drew a barrage of spin-off products: novels, comics, magazines, trading cards, and a radio drama based on the film for NPR.

Radio dramas once had been extremely popular. *Dragnet*, *Superman*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Green Hornet*, and many

Director John Madden (left) with Producer Tom Voegelé.

other television shows of the 1950s and 1960s had their roots in radio, as did many soap operas. Thus, when Lucasfilm adapted *Star Wars* to radio—a film that owed much to 1930s serials such as *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*—it was a natural fit.

Lucasfilm chose Brian Daley to script the *Star Wars* radio drama. His *The Doomfarers of Coramonde* (1977) and its 1979 sequel *The Star Followers of Coramonde* were already science-fiction hits. Daley was no stranger to *Star Wars*, having written a trilogy of novels about Han Solo for Del Rey Books from 1979 to 1980. Daley would go on to pen a *Star Wars* audio-tale for Buena Vista Records entitled *Rebel Mission to Ord Mantell*, as well as the story to Dark Horse Comics' Droids one-shot *The Protocol Offensive*, which was scripted by Anthony Daniels and Ryder Windham after Daley's death in 1996.

Recorded in Los Angeles in 1980, the *Star Wars* radio drama was a huge success, due in part to the added depth of Daley's additions. In Daley's hands, a five-second shot on film blossomed into a vital 15-minute sequence; some chapters consisted of entirely new material. "In expanding George Lucas' creation to 13 half-hour episodes," he wrote, "we who worked on the project got to revive 'lost scenes' from the screenplay and explore quirky corners of the story; in some ways, the dramatization was akin to Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, which shows what was happening elsewhere during Shakespeare's *Hamlet*."

Those who tuned in learned of Leia's life on Alderaan and how she became custodian to the Death Star plans; they also learned of the droids' activities on the *Tantive IV*, Luke's adventures with Biggs and others on Tatooine, Han Solo's encounter with an enforcer for Jabba the Hutt named Big Bunji, Leia's violent interrogation at the hands of Darth Vader, and much more. As Daley explained, "There are some 27 minutes or so of dialogue in the course of the one-hour-and-fifty-minute movie; we had a running time of more than six hours."

The series was special to George Lucas. To make *Star Wars* available to children unable to afford movie tickets, Lucas sold the radio serial to KUSC-FM (a public-radio affiliate at the University of Southern California, his alma mater) for one dollar. NPR was ecstatic, and word of the dramatization spread fast. When it spread to those on the set of *The Empire Strikes Back*, Harrison Ford was quoted in Alan Arnold's *Once Upon a Galaxy: A Journal of the Making of The*



Empire Strikes Back as saying that "until something like this happens, you don't realize how possessive you've become about the character you're playing."

Mark Hamill agreed, informing producer Gary Kurtz that he wanted to be involved. NPR was happy to have Hamill aboard and was doubly pleased when Anthony Daniels signed on. Also cast were Perry King as Han Solo, Ann Sachs as Princess Leia, Brock Peters as Darth Vader, Bernard Behrens as Obi-Wan Kenobi, Keene Curtis as Grand Moff Tarkin, and Stephen Elliott as Prestor Organa (Leia's father, now known as Bail Organa). Ken Hiller narrated the series, although Daley had hoped for Orson Welles. Some of the more recognizable names belonged to the supporting cast: Adam Arkin of *Northern Exposure*; Meshach Taylor of *Designing Women*; *In Living Color*'s David Alan Grier; and character actors Jerry Hardin, known to *X-Files* fans as Deep Throat, and David Paymer, who won an Oscar nod as Billy Crystal's brother in *Mr. Saturday Night*.

Star Wars was the highest-rated drama in NPR's history. More than 750,000 listeners tuned in, and over 50,000 phone calls and letters poured in from listeners. NPR logged a 40 percent audience increase that year, with overall growth of drama listenership rising 135 percent. NPR executives attributed this growth entirely to *Star Wars*. Thus, it was no surprise when Daley was asked to adapt *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Once again, Lucas sold the radio rights for a dollar, and the actors traveled to New York City to record. Nearly the entire cast of the first dramatization returned, joined by award-winning actor John Lithgow as Yoda and *The Last Temptation of Christ*'s Alan Rosenberg as Boba Fett, with Billy Dee Williams reprising his Lando Calrissian role from the film. This time, supporting players included Jay Sanders, *Agnes of God* author John Pielmeier, *Everybody Loves Raymond* director Jerry Zaks, and even Daley himself as Han's stormtrooper guard on Cloud City.

The 10-episode *Empire* radio drama debuted on Valentine's Day of 1983. Talks quickly began about adapting *Return of the Jedi*, but the pro-

ject fell apart due to NPR funding cuts. It would take more than a decade to complete the trilogy. In 1996, HighBridge Audio answered fans' requests by reuniting the cast with director John Madden, producer Tom Voegel, and casting coordinator Mary Lylah "Mel" Sahr, the trio behind the first two series. Ballantine Books sweetened the deal by making all three scripts available in paperback and including material cut from the final recordings. Sadly, after completing most of the script for *Return of the Jedi: The Radio Drama*, Brian Daley fell ill with cancer, necessitating help from *Star Wars* novelist John Whitman in polishing the final product.

Anthony Daniels returned once more for the six-part *Jedi* adaptation, but with neither Mark Hamill nor Billy Dee Williams available, newcomer Josh Fardon and future *Ellen* star Arye Gross assumed their roles. Also along for the ride: Ed Asner in a casting coup as Jabba the Hutt, Ed Begley Jr. taking on Boba Fett, David Birney as Anakin Skywalker, Samantha Bennett as Arica (a.k.a. Mara Jade from the *Star Wars* novels), and David Dukes as Bib Fortuna. Other bit players included Lisa Simpson-in-the-making Yearley Smith as EV-9D9, and Ron West (*3rd Rock From the Sun*) in a supporting capacity.

Though shorter than the previous two installments, *Return of the Jedi: The Radio Drama* was a great success. When all three shows were released on CD, actors from the first two suddenly began receiving royalties again after many years. To the sorrow of all involved, however, the much-loved Brian Daley died only hours after recording on *Jedi* concluded. The cast had recorded goodbye messages, which were compiled to be sent to him at the hospital.

Brian Daley, beloved author of the Han Solo novels, wrote all three of the *Star Wars* Radio Dramas.

Star Wars Radio Drama Casting

A New Hope:



Brock Peters
Darth Vader

Bernard Behrens
Obi-Wan Kenobi

Keene Curtis
Grand Moff Tarkin

Adam Arkin
Supporting

Meshach Taylor
Supporting

The Empire Strikes Back:



John Lithgow
Yoda

Alan Rosenberg
Boba Fett

Billy Dee Williams
Lando Calrissian

Jay Sanders
Supporting

Jerry Zaks
Supporting

Return of the Jedi:



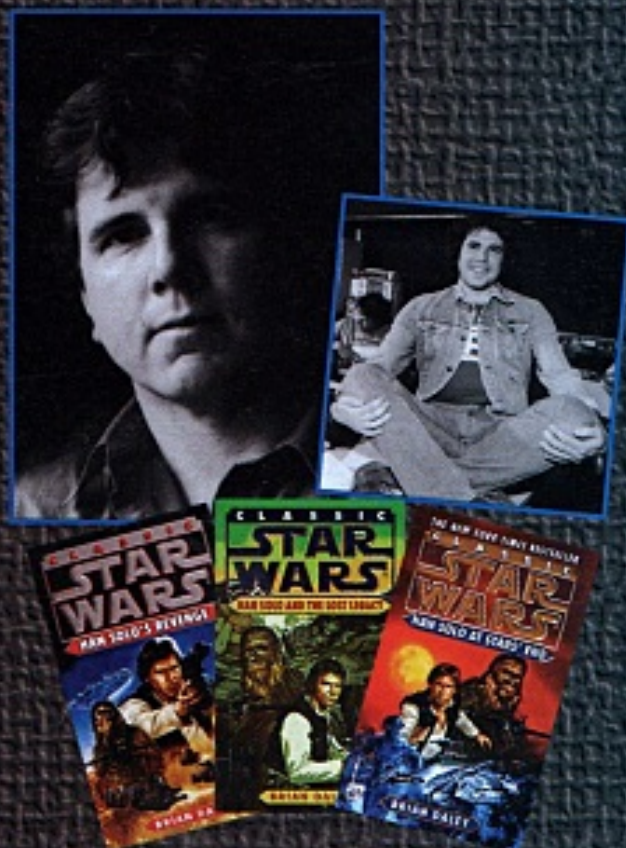
Ed Begley Jr.
Boba Fett

David Birney
Anakin

David Dukes
Bib Fortuna

Yearley Smith
EV-9D9

Ron West
Supporting



Recently, *Insider* spoke with eight members of the radio drama casts. Read on as they recall their days in the studio, their appreciation for both Daley and Madden, and a few anecdotes along the way.

THE LIGHT SIDE

ANN SACHS: A PRINCESS BY ANY OTHER NAME

Ann Sachs played Princess Leia in all three series, but these days she designs theaters instead of acting in them. As president and CEO of Sachs Morgan Studio, she and husband Roger Morgan (a Tony Award-winning theater designer) have redesigned New York City's Ford Center for the Performing Arts, the Pantages in Los Angeles, and other theaters throughout America. Sachs is grateful to be remembered as Leia after all these years and says that playing the role that made Carrie Fisher famous was surprisingly easy.

"I think our job was so simple," she says, "because acting on the radio returns you to a sort of primal love of performing. You kind of go back to your childlike self, and you just pretend. It's all the imagination, and there's nothing else, so it is such a joyful experience. It really takes you back to the primary reason you became an actor."

Sachs got the role of Leia largely due to her connection to director John Madden. "[John] had a substantial career at the BBC," she says, "and I did a number of radio plays with him. We both remarked about the purity of the form. It's totally up to your imagination, with nothing getting in its way." Sachs, in fact, names Madden as her favorite director in any medium, adding, "He is completely brilliant. I met John a few years before we did the first one. He was directing and teaching

at Yale Graduate School, and I was there as a guest artist, playing Rosalind in *As You Like It*. He was very flattering about my work, and I was so happy when I got a call a couple of years later."

Her first decision was not to tread familiar ground. "I talked to John about it, and I said, 'Listen, I think it would be a disaster if I tried to imitate Carrie Fisher because I'm not a mimic,' and he said, 'I want you to do this because you're you, and you have your voice and your talent and your impulses.'" To find her own voice, she pondered what it was that made Leia interesting. "What I realized, when I saw *Star Wars* on film, is that Carrie had a marvelous sort of bluntness about her, and that's what I tried to focus on with my reading—she was no-nonsense blunt and not easily wooed by Han. Given the storyline that marvelous Brian Daley had written for all of them, I just had to play it."

Still, when Madden invited her back for *Return of the Jedi*, she was skeptical about the wisdom of accepting the job. "I said, 'John, you've got to be kidding. . . I haven't done this for 15 years! I don't belong to the unions, I have a different career—I think you want my daughter!' And he said, 'Ann, it's radio—it doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter what you look like. It's the purity of voice.'"

As a performer who studied hard to learn her craft, Sachs says she has always been able to use her voice. This, she feels, helped her step back into the role of Leia as if little time had passed. "All these years later, when we did the final episode of the series, there I was, nearly 50 and able to sound as if I was in my early 20s. It was very gratifying!"

A particular thrill for Sachs was working opposite Perry King, with whom she spent the majority of her acting time. "Perry is a dream," says Sachs. "I'd never worked with him before, and we were delighted that we did all three of the segments together. It was nothing but fun. We would try stuff together and then we'd get ideas and say, 'Oh, oh, oh, John, can we try this?' We were always building on each other's energy. It was so much fun. I would work with him again in a second in a radio capacity."

PERRY KING: GOING SOLO

Veteran actor Perry King, best known for his TV work on *Riptide*, *Melrose Place*, and *Titans*, looks back on his radio days with great fondness. What fans might not know is that he read for the film role of Han before playing him on radio. "I auditioned with Charles Martin Smith [of *American Graffiti* fame, and now a director], who also wasn't in the film," King recalls.

King insists he wasn't upset when Harrison Ford got the role. "You lose parts all the time. Everybody does, even if you're Harrison, so you never let that worry you. Everyone gets their piece of the action. I've had plenty of work in my life, so it was never anything I minded a bit." In fact, he has nothing but praise for Ford: "I couldn't begin to compete with him! I can't imagine anyone doing better than him. But I was grateful that, for whatever reason, he wasn't in the radio show, so I got a chance to do it after all."

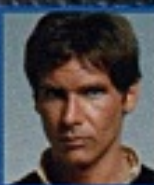
Twenty-five years later, one memory that particularly resonates is meeting George Lucas. "It was during the initial [movie] auditions—and this was before he made the first film, so nobody knew anything about it—I remember specifically he said he was



Carrie Fisher

ANN
SACHS

PERRY
KING



Harrison Ford

making a movie for children, for kids. He said, 'Kids of any age, it could be 60 years old, but it's going to be a kids' movie.' I remember being really fascinated by the idea: a kids' movie for kids of any age. If you were still thinking like a kid when you were 60 years old, you were going to like *Star Wars*. And he told me that before he ever shot a foot of film."

Like Sachs, King purposely tried not to emulate his screen counterpart. "Harrison was so good in the part," he says. "I knew that I couldn't begin to compete with him, and I certainly didn't want to do a second-rate imitation of him. So I figured the best thing was just to do my version of it and let that stand... do the best job I could do at my take on Han Solo, as if I'd never seen his performance."

King says the actors were instructed simply to do the best they could within that framework and to enjoy doing it. "That's what I remember

strange. I knew a number of the other actors who were involved: Perry King and I were acquainted, and Ed Asner and I had worked together several times through L.A. Theater Works."

Though a newcomer, Gross never felt unwelcome in the studio. "It was very much like, 'Welcome to the family.' Anthony Daniels was tremendously warm and gracious, and extraordinarily helpful since he knows the stories and the scenes and the motives so well." He adds, "You really had this sense that they appreciated your pitching in. It was quite nice, and I had a great time."

Like Sachs and King, Gross tried to find his own voice for Lando rather than mimicking what had already been done. However, he acknowledges infusing his portrayal with "the kind of strength and swagger" he remembered Williams bringing to his performance. "I don't think I even had time to watch Billy's performance as Lando,"

"You're in a studio, you're standing in front of a mike... and you have to create the world with your voice." —Arye Gross

about all three of them—it was the most fun you could possibly imagine. Acting isn't always fun to do, for lots of reasons. It can be difficult, frustrating, demanding, and it can also be filled with a lot of pressure. In this case, in all three of those shows, it was just sheer joy to do them."

When *Jedi* was green-lighted years later, King marveled at the chance to see all his old friends once more. "It was like Rip Van Winkle," he laughs. "We were all the same people, but we all looked as if... well, John Madden and Ann Sachs, all of us, we all looked like we'd had a terrible weekend!"

What he remembers most about the third installment, though, is saying goodbye to Brian Daley, with whom he'd been quite close. "More than anybody, I came away with a lasting friendship with him, and I was so saddened by his death, but at the same time I was thrilled that he knew we were doing it right as he was going. Like September 11, there's always some good quality to something bad, and it was a beautiful thing that Brian knew we were thinking of him and talking to him at the very end of his life. I know it helped him with his leaving. He was at peace, much more so than he would have been."

ARYE GROSS: OLD SMOOTHIE

Widely recognized for his work in such 1980s teen films as *Just One of the Guys* and *Soul Man*, as well as TV's *Ellen* and the films *Gone in Sixty Seconds* and *Minority Report*, Gross was chosen to take over as Lando Calrissian for the *Return of the Jedi* radio show. "Usually," the actor explains with tongue firmly planted in cheek, "when Billy Dee is unavailable for something, I'm the first person people think of, so it was such a natural thing that I'd do it. We look so much alike!"

In actuality, Gross got the job through his extensive history with L.A. Theater Works, a group that records stage-play readings for live radio, in front of audiences. "When Billy Dee's life was a little complicated," he recalls, "somebody involved called and said, 'Are you available and would you do this?'" Having already done a variety of characters for NPR, Gross jumped at the chance.

Though stepping into Williams' shoes had been unexpected, he found them surprisingly comfortable. "For me," says Gross, "it wasn't

says Gross. "I just had to imagine what he felt like. I'd seen them when the movies had come out—it must have been 14 or 15 years before—and I didn't really want to look at them because I didn't want to try to duplicate what he was doing."

These days, Gross is hard at work producing Literary Stages Los Angeles with partners Cedering Fox, Don Boughton, Stages Theatre Center, and MarVista Entertainment. Held regularly at L.A.'s Cafe Des Artistes, the program features "an evening of gastronomic delights and delectable literary readings offered by authors and actors of



Billy Dee Williams

ARYE
GROSS

JOSHUA
FARDON



Mark Hamill

note." Hundreds of actors have done readings for the production, including James Cromwell, Nichelle Nichols, Brendan Fraser, Andrew McCarthy, Minnie Driver, and others.

Gross counts his *Star Wars* work as some of the most rewarding he's done. Despite a long career in film and TV, he enjoys radio and stage work the most. His approach to each medium varies greatly. "Sometimes you work with oils," he explains, "sometimes you work with watercolors, and you work in a different way. With radio, it requires greater visualization. You're in a studio, you're standing in front of a mike, the pages are sitting there in front of you, and you have to create the world with your voice."

JOSHUA FARDON: YOUNG JEDI KNIGHT

Also new to *Return of the Jedi* was young stage actor Joshua Fardon. Among his prior credits: Sybille Pearson's *Unfinished Stories*, in which he acted opposite *The Ewok Adventure* actress Fionnula Flanagan; and *The Yellow Boat*, David P. Saar's tale of his eight-year-old son Benjamin, a hemophiliac who contracted HIV from blood transfusions. Fardon has done some screen work in recent years, including *Conspiracy Theory*, *Volcano*, *The West Wing*, and *Star Kid*, as well as the *Star Trek: Voyager* video game *Elite Force*.

Like Gross, Fardon felt very welcome on the set, despite assuming the role of Luke from Mark Hamill. "I felt so privileged just to be there," he remembers, "and I was so amazed by the whole experience. Perry King and Ann Sachs were really nice—I mean, they were the nicest people in the world—so I never felt like an outsider. And Anthony Daniels—it still freaks me out that I worked with him."

Fardon's reaction to Daniels, in fact, took on an element of hero worship, the actor recalls with a laugh. "I got there that morning and was introduced to him, and they had me put on cams and headphones, and he was standing in another booth. We started doing this scene together, and I thought, 'Oh my gosh, this is such a freak-out for me!' I asked him to go to lunch with me, and he did, but I never got over it—I was like, 'But you're . . . you're . . . Threepio!' So it was really cool."

As a child and self-described *Star Wars* fan, Fardon repeatedly watched the first film in his hometown of Knoxville, Tennessee—he even stood in line for three hours on the day it opened. "When I went in for the audition," says Fardon, "John Madden asked me if I was familiar with the movies, and I was like, 'Yeah, I've seen them like 12 times!'" Hamill had so defined the role of Luke Skywalker, he says, that it was "really weird" to be given so iconic a character to portray.

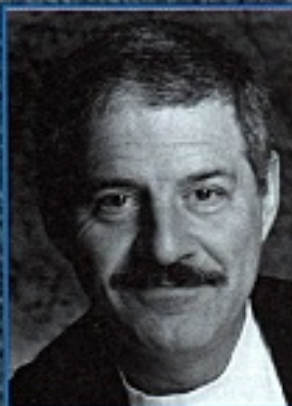
He had not, however, heard the first two radio shows. "I was aware of them," he clarifies, "but had not listened to them. I did as soon as I found out I got the job, though." Hearing Hamill's performance was a bit intimidating. "I was sent the other programs in the mail, and I thought, 'Wow, he's really, really good at this!'"

What's more, Fardon had never done radio before, except for a small appearance on a BBC broadcast of *Julius Caesar*. "So," the actor says, "when I got there for the first day of work, I didn't know what to do. I had this picture of everyone sitting around with cups of coffee, and you'd just sit there and talk into a microphone. It was very different from that—it was extremely different from that actually, and it makes me kind of sad that radio drama is no longer as big as it once was. Once you get the hang of it—and this was, for me, an intensive crash course of a week—it's amazing."

While other actors in the cast avoided mimicking their onscreen counterparts, Fardon's portrayal of Luke was similar to Hamill's—something not even Fardon expected. "What they did with my voice, when I heard it played back, is put a lot of treble in it. They brought out as much youth as there was in it. So I feel like, yes, I somewhat sounded like Mark Hamill in some regards, but at the same time there was never any pressure on me like, 'Oh, no, no, that's not how Mark would sound.'" Instead, he says, director John Madden would often ask, "Josh, how are you going to be Luke?" Thus, he was somewhat surprised to find out later that his voice had been altered.

Still, like his castmates, Fardon was extremely impressed with Madden, who helped him turn in the best performance he could. "I was so happy to see that John has gone on to be such a success, because I was extremely impressed with how well he did. He quickly, and under the gun time-wise, accomplished an enormous amount in a very small amount of time and of extremely high quality." Madden, of course, has since earned fame as the director of *Mrs. Brown*, *Shakespeare in Love*, and *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*.

Fardon again voiced Luke for Disney's book-and-record adaptations of the classic trilogy. "Perry and Brock did the voices for those as well," Fardon says, "and also Anthony. I just got a phone call saying, 'Would you be interested in doing this?' I said, 'Of course.'" The experience of recording the tapes, however, was very different, as the actors did not get to work together. "We would just come in and do our lines



Ian
McDiarmid

PAUL
HECHT

EDWARD
ASNER



Jabba
the Hutt

and there was no give-and-take, acting-wise. You just plug in a line. The way those records are set up, it's like, 'The narrator, the narrator, the narrator, one line, the narrator, the narrator,' so there was no need for us to be together for that anyway."

THE DARK SIDE PAUL HECHT: MASTER OF EVIL

Fardon spent much of his time acting alongside Paul Hecht, who played the Emperor in all three dramatizations and is most recognized for his roles on *Kate & Allie*, *As the World Turns*, and *All My Children*. Fardon describes the middle-aged thespian with admiration: "He was great! He has such an amazing voice! He was just this guy in a sweater, and all of a sudden we were doing the thing where Palpatine is firing

plays Kroll's father. Hecht can also be heard in a variety of productions for the Recorded Books website.

Radio, though, remains his first love. "I'm one of those actors," he says, "who just loves radio. In fact, I started in radio." As a staff announcer at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, he prides himself at having been "slightly senior to Peter Jennings in those days." Hecht performed dozens of shows for the legendary Hil Brown, who directed many radio programs in the 1930s and 1940s and is still working for NPR today. "He wants me to do Woodrow Wilson for him, and I also do *Selected Shorts* for NPR, a series in which actors read stories to a rapt audience."

Though his *Star Wars* memories may be spotty, Hecht does recall enjoying it very much. "It was just one of those lovely experiences

"I blew myself up in bullfrog fashion each time I spoke." —Edward Asner

these bolts of lightning, and literally, I was on the ground, screaming, while John Madden was mime-throwing bolts of lightning at me. And every time he did it, I would scream louder, while Paul Hecht was doing his routine. You'd be surprised how physical a lot of it was and how much we really had to act all of this stuff out!"

Hecht's memories of his *Star Wars* radio days are sketchy, having faded over time. "I can't remember that far back," he laments, able only to recall the third installment. "I was reminded of it when my agent called and said, 'Paul, do you remember when you did a voice for *Star Wars* for radio?' And as one does as an actor, I zoomed back to a kind of ancient, dusty, black-curtained booth where I said a line or two for a fraction of what I normally work for because it was NPR. So I said, 'Yeah, I think so.' And he said, 'Well, they're doing another one, and they want you to do it.' And I said, 'Great, I'll go back to one of those dusty corners of the world where we speak into microphones!'"

Though he has never met Ian McDiarmid, Hecht says he feels "very close" to him after thrice playing the character McDiarmid refined onscreen following Clive Revill's depiction in *Empire*. "He's a wonderful, wonderful actor," Hecht says. "I wouldn't say I imitated [him], but certainly I was seriously influenced, in the way that, say, a jazz musician could be influenced by somebody else's performance on the same instrument."

Hecht says he "loved" playing the Emperor and is heartened that Palpatine's involvement in the prequels could some day reopen old doors for him. "My kids told me about that," he says, "and my heart started to beat because I thought, 'Oooh, they could call me back—wouldn't that be nice!'" He counts himself "a big *Star Wars* fan," as are his nine- and 11-year-old sons, who listen to the radio dramas often on CD and are proud of their actor-father. "Certain jobs one lusts after because one knows one's position in one's kids' eyes is going to zoom up, and that was certainly one of them for me."

Hecht's most recent work, in Showtime's *Last Call*, starring Jeremy Irons, Neve Campbell, and Sissy Spacek, chronicles the life of F. Scott Fitzgerald, based on the memoirs of his secretary, Frances Kroll. He

where... well, usually if something goes wrong it's a good story, but nothing went wrong here. It was one of those harmonious times with a wonderful director, in a studio with terrific people. I remember it as one of these heavenly experiences that occur not often in a freelance actor's life."

EDWARD ASNER: THE MIGHTY JARBA

When NPR was given the go-ahead to record *Return of the Jedi: The Radio Drama*, fans were abuzz with excitement, but few aspects of the production caused as much buzz as the casting of television icon Ed



Stormtrooper #2

DAVID
ALAN GRIER

JERRY
HARDIN



Asner, whose amazing acting abilities allowed him to do Jabba's voice without the need for electronic enhancements. So mesmerized were his castmates that whenever he worked the studio would be jam-packed with people anxious to watch him perform—whether they were working that day or not.

One would be hard-pressed not to recognize Asner, who has racked up hundreds of film and television appearances throughout his career. Immortalized by *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and his own spinoff series, *Lou Grant*, Asner has become one of America's most respected actors. As such, the idea of his voicing a giant slug in space is more than a little amusing.

Asner looks back on the role with a good deal of humor, claiming it was "his beauty" that first attracted him to the role of Jabba. When asked to elaborate on Ann Sachs' comment that he physically acted like Jabba while reading lines, Asner explains that "I blew myself up in bullfrog fashion each time I spoke," adding, "man, you can really get stretch marks." With regard to how he approached the role, he answers with a straight face, "I wanted to emulate the movie-Jabba as closely as possible, so I gained 5,000 pounds. Didn't do much for my love life, though."

Taking himself more seriously, Asner remarks that the atmosphere on the recording set was excellent and that everyone treated him "like an artist." Tongue-in-cheek, he adds, "John and Brian are now in my will."

Top: Anthony Daniels (C-3PO), Bernard Behrens (Ben Kenobi), Perry King (Han Solo), and Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker). Bottom: David Crennon (Motti), Keene Curtis (Grand Moff Tarkin) and Brock Peters (Darth Vader).

Like Hecht and others in the cast, Asner has a radio background and greatly enjoys that medium. "I love radio," he says, having done a good deal of it in high school. "It's totally distinct from all other forms of media. I wish there was much more of it to do." He also counts himself a *Star Wars* fan and says that were NPR to record radio dramatizations of the prequel trilogy, he would "leap at the chance to do young Jabba."

Doing justice to *Star Wars* in a medium that precludes visuals or electronic aids, he admits, was not easy. To that end, he "kept trying to achieve it all with my sweet voice, which ain't nothing where electronic effects are handy." As he looks back on his *Star Wars* radio days, he takes with him three things: "A strained voice, a realization that anyone could have done it, and great pleasure at having been chosen."

AND ON THE SIDELINES

DAVID ALAN GRIER: TAKING THE GALAXY BY STORM

David Alan Grier needs no introduction to anyone who watched television or movies in the 1990s. A hilarious comedian, he cracked up audiences in *Amazon Women on the Moon*, *I'm Gonna Get You Sucka*, *Jumanji*, and *In Living Color*, and more recently as the star of *DAG* and host of Comedy Central's *Premium Blend*. To *Star Wars* fans, Grier will forever be immortalized as Stormtrooper #2.

Grier's brief radio days are still a source of pride for him. "As an actor," he says, "I rarely ever get to perform for radio. The whole process was archaic, but it was really fun to do. And I knew then that it would be the only time I was going to be able to do a radio drama because people just don't do them anymore. They do play readings, but this was old-style. It was state-of-the-art—they even had sound effects. They were doing a complete production."

Grier's casting in the first two installments is not surprising, as director John Madden was his directing teacher at the Yale School of Drama. "I had come out to Los Angeles for the summer," the actor recalls, "and John told me—he was a really great teacher, and he taught us Shakespeare—he was doing a radio version of *Star Wars* and said, 'Give me your number—you can do extra work, small parts, whatever.'" Of course, Grier—still just a student—jumped at the chance. "It was like \$700 a day, and I may have worked three or four days, and that financed my entire summer! My work-study at Yale was like, \$25 a week, so this was h-u-g-e!"

Grier describes the experience of recording lines at a studio on Beverly Boulevard as being "so much fun," adding with a chuckle, "I played Stormtrooper #2, and they would take filters and all these weird sound effects and muffle my voice, and I'd say lines like [in a deep tone:] 'Stop! Who goes there? In the name of the—' I don't know, what was it called? The Federation? The Empire? In the name of the Empire!"

When he first heard NPR's plans for the radio shows, Grier admits the idea made no sense to him. "I thought, 'Why would they do a radio version of *Star Wars*? Who cares?'" But then it became really, really popular. He attributes the shows' success to Madden, emphasizing again how truly talented he considers the British director. Grier also has high praise for Mark Hamill, with whom he developed a friendship.



"Mark invited me out to his house," Grier says, "and this was the first time I'd ever gone to a big Hollywood house. I hadn't even graduated—it was after my second year—and for me, this was a great way to make some money during the summer. So Mark had this weenie roast at his house, and he had this one room that was filled with *Star Wars* stuff. He got every game, every poster, everything that was related to the movie." Not much of a collector, Grier laughs at the memory. "I thought, 'This guy's a weirdo! Why would you want all that?' But he was really cool, and we stayed in touch."

After graduating from Yale, Grier received a Tony nomination as Jackie Robinson in the Broadway musical *The First*, then returned to NPR to record *Empire*. "I'd lost," he recalls, referring to the Tony nod, "and I remember Mark Hamill had gone out and gotten one of these mock-up newspapers printed up that said something like, 'Grier Wins Tony!'"

JERRY HARDIN, OFFICERS AND GENTLEMEN

What do Lyndon B. Johnson, Mark Twain, and Deep Throat have in common? They've all been played by the same actor in sci-fi settings (*The Twilight Zone*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *The X-Files*, respectively). Jerry Hardin, veteran character actor of nearly fifty years, is one of those actors you see everywhere. He's been in movies—*Cujo*, *Big Trouble in Little China*, and *Ghosts of Mississippi*—and on television—on *L.A. Law* and *Melrose Place*. Chances are you've seen him somewhere.

Those who tuned in to NPR's first *Star Wars* radio drama have heard him as well. Cast as an extra, Hardin portrayed a variety of "rocket-ship pilots and captains and officers, giving directions to rocket ships as Lieutenant or Captain So-and-So." Playing them, he says, involved "barking out commands to various and sundry underlings, adding to the confusion and the excitement of the combat."

Prior to *Star Wars*, Hardin had done little in the way of radio acting. "If it wasn't the first time," he recalls, "it was awfully close to the first." What drew NPR to him, he says, was the high number of sci-fi roles he'd done during his career, including roles in *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Twilight Zone*, and *The Incredible Hulk*. "I just began doing science fiction," Hardin says. "The fantasy of it is delightful; the most difficult aspect is when you get on something like *Star Trek* and there's all of this gobbledy-gook about machinery that makes it really tough to remember. You know, 'What does this knob do?'"

Hardin already knew Ann Sachs at the time, having been a friend of her husband. "When he was courting her I met her, and now I've known her for years. We spend time in each other's homes—though we live on different coasts—and we're still friends." Like Sachs, many of his inner circle of friends started out in theater, and a surprising number of them are still in the industry—a fairly unusual situation since the attrition rate in acting is usually substantial.

What Hardin found most curious about doing the NPR radio show was how high the expectations for its success were. "Just judging by the kinds of residual checks I got from it," he adds, "there seems to have been a time frame where it was played a fair amount, right after we made it—and then nothing. I said, 'Well, you know, it had its life, and it's over with.'" To his astonishment, when the series was released

on CD years later, the checks started pouring in once more. "There was this whole new life, and I thought, 'Well, son-of-a-gun, that's extraordinary. People are going back to radio!'"

Since *Star Wars*, Hardin has done a number of radio projects, though he says film and television work remain far more consistent. "We have an organization here that does play scripts for radio, and I've done two or three. They do live performances for subscription audiences, and we get full houses. I also did a Broadway show a year and a half ago now, a revival of *Rainmaker*. Within six or eight months after we came down to Broadway, they asked us to record it for radio." Hardin has also worked with fellow actor and close friend John de Lancie, whose popular *Alien Voices* series features readings of *The Invisible Man*, *War of the Worlds*, and other classics.

Working on NPR's *Star Wars* radio drama, Hardin developed a great appreciation for those who make a career recording radio plays, something he admits he wouldn't want to do. Radio, he says, is "a whole different medium" from television. "I find it a struggle because my instinct is to move around and worry about where I am and what I'm doing—and, of course, that doesn't work overly well with a microphone, and the audience doesn't know what the hell you're doing anyway." Still, he has only fond memories of, as Daley wrote in his introduction, "the places and times where Luke's adventures all began and George Lucas' magic resides." ☺

Top: John Lithgow (Yoda)/Anthony Daniels (C-3PO). Bottom: Anthony Daniels, Ann Sachs (Princess Leia), Perry King (Han Solo) and Billy Dee Williams (Lando Calrissian) recording *The Empire Strikes Back*.





The Clone Wars

LEAGUE OF SPIES

by Aaron Allston

"I'm here to make your day a lucky one," Joram said.

The head he addressed had sharp, intelligent features surrounded by a neatly trimmed black beard and mustache. The man who owned it had the door to his quarters open only a few centimeters so Joram couldn't see the rest of his body.

The man said nothing. He glanced over Joram's shoulder to the landspeeder lane beyond, a city thoroughfare that was crowded with fast-moving speeders and slower delivery flats.

Joram repeated, "I'm here to make your day—"

The door slid fully open, revealing the man to be of Joram's above-average height. He was as broad in the shoulder as Joram but more muscular. He wore close-fitting black garments that were completely out of style on this color-mad, comfort-conscious world. He seized the collar of Joram's tunic and yanked.

Joram couldn't help but lean forward, but caught himself on the doorjamb with one hand. "—a lucky one," he concluded.

"Get in here."

"Countersign."

"I'm your mission commander, and I say get in here instantly."

Joram grinned. "My blaster in your gut says I stay here until I hear the correct countersign."

The man looked down. A holdout blaster, small enough to be dwarfed by Joram's right hand, was indeed pressed into his stomach.

"I am very proficient in the combat arts and I knew that was there," the man said. "I could have taken it from you at any time."

"Countersign," Joram held his smile. A red dot danced around on the chest and neck of the man he faced, but the fellow couldn't see it. If he tried to seize the blaster, he would die.

The man sighed. "You don't need luck when you're as well-placed as I am."

"Correct," Joram returned the blaster to the holster against the base of his spine.

"Now get in here."

"And my partner?"

"Partner?"

"The one in the alley across the landspeeder lane. The one with the laser rifle pointed at your eye."

The man glared over Joram's shoulder. "Oh, him. I was wondering if you meant a second partner. Sure, have him over."

Joram crooked two fingers over his shoulder and beckoned.

Moments later, Mapper dodged traffic to cross the landspeeder lane and join them. He was a well-built man with dark hair, beard, and mustache that made his features seem brooding; he wore the lightweight, flowing garments common to this world of Tarhassan and carried an elongated case with the words "Pebdy Plumbing Supplies" stenciled on the side. The owner of the dwelling turned to lead Joram and Mapper inside.

The main living chamber was decorated in an even more mismatched

and garish fashion than the spaceport had been. The room's gold-brown tikkiwood paneling clashed with the overstuffed red-and-white-striped furniture that reminded Joram of overweight tourists at a beach resort. Two people were already there, a man and a woman arrayed upon and, in the woman's case, almost swallowed by the billowy furniture.

"All right, we're all here," their host said. "Let's get back to it. Our objective—"

"Maybe introductions first?" Joram said.

The man stood still for several moments, saying nothing, but his lips moved. It took Joram a moment to realize that he was counting to ten. "All right, all right," the man said. "I'm Cherek Tuhm." He cocked his head, looking at Joram as though waiting for a response.

Joram offered his hand. "Joram Kithe. And this is my partner, Mapper Gann."

Mapper gave the others a curt nod; he didn't speak. He seldom did, except to Joram. Mapper wasn't comfortable in most social situations. Only Joram and his superiors knew that Mapper was a clone trooper, one of the thousands of warriors bred to fight the Republic's wars. Mapper had belonged to a unit of enhanced clones, men with more personal initiative than most of their cohorts. Injured in the mission where he'd met Joram, he'd been unable to rejoin his unit for several weeks, so his supervisors had assigned him to Joram as bodyguard and partner—in part so that Joram could continue evaluating the virtues of clone troopers. Now operating with a new name, Mapper was unused to living outside the regimented and homogenized society of his peers. At least he did a fair job of concealing his unease.

Cherek ignored Joram's hand. He gestured to the woman. "Tinian Hanther." She was of less-than-average height and slender, middle-aged, with aristocratic features and intelligent hazel eyes. She wore expensive jade-green garments in the local style, plus a turban to match. She offered Joram and Mapper a brief smile and a nod.

Obviously wearying of the social niceties that were keeping him from his briefing, Cherek gestured dismissively at the last person present. "And Livintius Sazet. Can I stop wasting time now? I'm only the mission commander."

Livintius was humanoid but not human. Also middle-aged, the Falleen wore his graying black hair long in a ponytail. His skin had a

greenish tinge to it, and his eyes, though human in configuration, had a reptilian aloofness to them. His features were broad, his forehead high. He wore local garments in blues that contrasted well with his skin tone. He gave Joram and Mapper a little smile. "You are correct, Cherek. You are only the mission commander. Now we'll vote to see whether or not you may proceed."

"That's not funny," Cherek flopped into one of the overstuffed chairs. As he sank into it, it settled with a noise like an asthmatic bantha letting out a long breath. "You two, sit."

Joram did. Mapper set his rifle case against a bare section of wall and stood there.

Cherek shook his head a long moment, his manner that of a parent who has finally despaired of his children ever accomplishing anything in life, then leaned forward, making his chair wheeze again. "Here's the situation," he said. "As you know, this world of Tarhassan has recently declared itself for the Separatists, a surprise to the Republic."

Joram frowned. "Why didn't the Republic Intelligence team here warn us about their defection?" Every world within the Republic had an Intelligence team, even if that team consisted of a pair of agents who spent most of their time watching broadcast entertainments.

"Aha!" Cherek said. His expression suggested that his children might not be irredeemable after all. "The Intelligence team here disappeared six days before the government announced for the Separatists. Our goal is to find him."

"Him?" Tinian looked offended. "The entire team here was just a him?"

Cherek nodded. "His name is Edbit Teeks. His partner retired a few months ago, and, things being so settled and tame here, Intelligence didn't get around to worrying about a replacement for several weeks. It was during those weeks that the Clone Wars began. At that point, allocation of resources became problematic."

"So," Joram asked, "what do we know about this Teeks' disappearance?"

Livintius shook his head. "No, no, no. That's not next."

"Not next?" Joram repeated.

"On the agenda." At Joram's blank stare, Livintius continued, "I've drawn up a formal agenda for this meeting. Here." He reached behind his seat, causing the furniture to whuff and sigh, then leaned forward to hand Joram a printout.

Joram glanced over it. It began:

Republic Intelligence Meeting

Tarhassan, Quarters of Cherek Tuhm

1. **Gathering of Operatives**
 - a. Cherek Tuhm
 - b. Tinian Hanther
 - c. Livintius Sazet
 - d. Joram Kithe
2. **Prebriefing Synopsis**
 - a. Where We Are
 - b. Why We're Here (Mission Objectives)
3. **Getting to Know You**
4. **Formal Briefing**
 - a. Objective Summary
 - b. Resources
 - c. Break for Snacks (Optional)
 - d. Presentation of Pre-Gathered Information

As you know, this world of Tarhassan has recently declared itself for the Separatists, a surprise to the Republic.

Joram read on and on. The agenda, printed in small text, filled the page.

"I apologize," Livintius said, "for not including the name of your partner on the agenda. I didn't know he'd be coming. You can be certain that the updated version will include it."

Joram cleared his throat. "I don't mean to criticize—"

"Don't feel at all bad about it, young man," Livintius said. "I'm always striving to improve my work. Take your best shot. The worst that can happen is that my next agenda will be even better."

"Yes. Well, I have no objection to the agenda as such. But let's say that you were nabbed by our counterparts in PlanSec, Tarhassan Planetary Security, shortly after you printed this. They'd know the rest of our names and where we were meeting. They'd be able to grab us up, too."

Livintius sat back, his brow furrowed, thinking hard. "I'll be... You're entirely correct. That would have been disastrous. Let's bring this up again when we get to 'New Business.'"

"You're, um, new to Intelligence, aren't you?"

Livintius brightened. "Which brings us right into Item Three, Getting to Know You. Yes, I am. As are we all."

Joram looked at the others. "How's that again?"

Tinian smiled. "Well, not to put too fine a point on it, but our Intelligence careers, and the creation of this temporary unit, are all results of your success on Pengalan. Yes, we know who you are and what you've done, Joram."

What Joram had done was accompany a military expedition to the world of Pengalan. That campaign to win the world back from the Separatists had failed, and Joram had been stranded there with a squadron of clone troopers. Joram, then an accountant from the Ministry of Finance, had worked with the troopers, and their combined skills had allowed a number of them to get off that world alive. "So, in running away successfully, I—"

"No, not that." She shook her head, and her voice took on a condescending tone. "Your success demonstrated the degree to which an operative from Finance could contribute to Intelligence operations. Immediately after your report was evaluated, a subcommittee of the Republic Senate recommended that Intelligence begin a pilot program to evaluate the suitability of experts from other government divisions."

Joram felt his heart sink. "So not one of you was in Intelligence prior to my mission on Pengalan?"

"That's right," Cherek said. "Though the intensive training we've received, our personal competence, and pure intellect more than makes up for any deficits of experience."

"More than make up," Livintius said. "Subject-verb agreement, Cherek."

"Yes, yes."

Joram decided that it might undermine the group's confidence if he were to cradle his head in his hands. Sobbing would probably make the situation even worse.

"So," he managed to choke out, "where are you all from, originally?"

"Ministry of Licenses and Permits," Cherek said. "But I've been training in hand-to-hand combat all my life. I've been the Ministry of Licenses and Permits hand-to-hand combat champion for eight consecutive years."

"I'm from the Department of Health," Tinian said, pride in her voice. "Flora. I specialize in grains."

"I've held positions in both the Ministry of Public Information and the

Ministry of Education," Livintius said. "In truth, I've spent my entire adult life in the hallowed halls of education, and let me tell you, transferring to Intelligence was just the opportunity I needed to couple practical experience with the cool perspective of academia."

"Your background we know," Tinian said. "And your partner?"

"Mapper's an ex-trooper," Joram said. "He's been on the front lines."

Cherek turned a cold look on Mapper. Joram supposed the man felt threatened by the presence of someone with actual, rather than tournament, combat experience. Mapper ignored him.

"Well," Cherek said. "I think we've accomplished Getting to Know You. Next?"

Livintius beamed. "Item Four, Formal Briefing. Sub-Item A, Objective Summary."

Cherek took over. "We know that Edbit Teeks was reported missing by his lover, Zazana Renkel, a local woman; her statement indicated that she saw him being grabbed off the lane in front of her quarters. A little research into her background reveals that she's a member of PlanSec. And since the Book says that an Intelligence operative should not get emotionally involved with locals, we can presume that Teeks believed he was working her without her knowledge when she was, in fact, aware of his true role and working him. Obviously, she arranged for his arrest."

Joram frowned. "If she had him grabbed, why file a report about his disappearance and leave a trail back to herself?"

"Aha!" Cherek said. "To establish her innocence in the face of further inquiry, of course. And she obviously fooled you. But not me. Now—where was I?"

"Arranged for his arrest," Tinian said. "Do keep up, Cherek."

"Right, right. So our task is to grab her and force her to tell us where he is. Once she's done that, we'll find it easier to reacquire him."

Livintius nodded sagely. "Rescue missions are much more efficacious when one knows where the object is being held."

Joram listened with half his attention. The other half struggled with the sense of doom that had descended on him, and with questions: Was it simple incompetence or some sort of secret effort to undermine the Republic's Intelligence community that had led to the establishment of this team? And what crime had he, Joram, committed to be attached to it?



"No more new business?" Cherek asked.

The others all shook their heads, even Mapper. The trooper was finally in one of the chairs. He looked as though he were contemplating the heat-entropy death of the galaxy.

Joram was numb. His butt was numb from hours of sitting. His mind was numb from hours of adherence to parliamentary procedure.

Cherek heaved a happy sigh. "Final item, then. Setting up a time and place for our next meeting. I recommend reconvening here, immediately after we've grabbed Zazana Renkel."

"When will that be?" asked Livintius.

"We can't be sure," Cherek said. "The operation to grab her is pretty simple, but there are time-related variables."

Livintius' mouth turned down. "These minutes, which constitute a portion of our official report, would be better if we could indicate a precise time."

Cherek considered. "You're right. How about midnight, local time, or

Immediately after we return from grabbing the Renkel woman, whichever is later?"

Livintius brightened again. "That'll work."

"Before we vote on that," Tinian said, "how about we set it for after we've interrogated the Renkel woman? That way, we'll have set up the inclusion of her responses into the next set of minutes."

"Ooh," Livintius said. "Good idea."

"Let's make this march," Cherek said. "Incorporating Tinian's revision, all in favor?"

"Wait," Tinian said, "no one seconded."

Livintius raised his hand. "I second."

"All in favor?" Cherek repeated.

There were five ayes.

"Move to adjourn," Cherek said.

"Second," Tinian said.

"All in favor?"

There were five ayes.

"Before we go," Cherek said, "everyone get into whatever you use for stealth-dress, hit the 'fresher, and visit the snack table again." He heaved himself upright, his chair sighing in relief, and headed toward one of the other rooms in the apartment. Tinian moved off toward another room, and Livintius materialized beside the snack table.

Joram looked at Mapper. "Kill me."

"You kill me first."

"I'm senior, and I want you to kill me."

"Cherek's the mission commander. Let's both kill him."

"I second. All in favor?"

There were two ayes.

Joram decided that Tarhassan was a pretty world by night as well as by day. As he and his team cruised the skyways of the city of Nehass, he could see a horizon-to-horizon vista of lights and buildings. The Tarhassans were obviously fond of colorful illuminations: One neighborhood would have pole-suspended streetlights in green, another in orange-yellow; the business district had many buildings that rose to altitudes of sixty or eighty stories, their curved architectural elements and

beveled corners subtly lit in blue.

In the dark, however, he couldn't see all the civic activities he'd glimpsed on his initial trip to Cherek's quarters—the construction of hardened gunnery bunkers, the drilling of infantry, the setup of watchstations on tall buildings, all part of the planet's preparations for war.

In fact, he could enjoy only a portion of the night view, stuck as he was in the rear seat of the closed-top airspeeder. Cherek insisted on controlling the vehicle, and Livintius had shrieked "Gunnery seat!" as soon as they approached the vehicle. Consequently, Livintius had some sort of right to sit in the front passenger seat, so Joram and Mapper were stuck in the back with Tinian.

Crammed in the back was more like it. The airspeeder was a compact model with powerful engines, but it had a passenger compartment ideally suited for two adults in front and shopping bags in back.

Joram said, "Where does this Renkel woman go?"

"Eh?" Cherek said.

"There's really not much room for a hostage back here. How big is the cargo compartment?"

"No cargo compartment," Cherek said. "We rented this one for speed."

"And style," Livintius added. "Intelligence agents should have style."

"Besides," Cherek said, "she's not a hostage. She's a prisoner of war."

"So where does the prisoner go?"

Cherek and Livintius looked at one another. "Across your laps?" Cherek said.

"I don't think so," Joram said.

"I'm the mission leader, and I say—"

"We'll vote on it, as usual. But there're three of us in the back, and we're the ones who'll have her across our laps, so I predict we'll all vote against." Joram got an immediate nod from Mapper, and, after a moment of consideration, a matching nod from Tinian. "See?"

Cherek sighed, vexed. "All right. We'll put Tinian up here between me and Livintius. Then you can have the hostage—"

"Prisoner of war," Livintius corrected.

"—prisoner of war between you. That way everyone's equally uncomfortable. Ah, here we are."

Cherek pushed the controls forward and sent the airspeeder into a power dive. Joram grabbed at the restraining straps. They held him in place but somehow let his stomach drift alarmingly within his body. The ground got bigger fast, its landspeeders starting as distant toys but growing in seconds to fast-moving traffic.

Joram looked over at Mapper; the trooper was holding on to his own straps with one hand and the seat back in front of him with the other, and Tinian was desperately holding on to him.

Then the world tilted again, and the landspeeders they were diving toward became landspeeders rushing straight at them. Joram felt the airspeeder shudder as its hull scraped the ground. They were skidding, turning the world beyond the windscreen into a whirl of lights that wobbled and shook. Finally they were still.

"Good job," Livintius said. "Not far from a parking slot." The aging academic seemed calm, although his skin had become reddish. It now began to fade back to its normal hue.

They were on a landspeeder lane, parked at an incorrect angle a meter from the raised walkway on one side. On the other side was a residential building. Although a midget by Coruscant standards, it rose high enough to loom over surrounding residences, twenty stories at least, and had a marquee sign on the front that read "Liezder Towers."

They were skidding, turning the world beyond the windscreen into a whirl of lights.

A moment later the words faded and were replaced by "Coruscant Living at Tarhassan Rates."

"I'm going to throw up," Tinian said.

"Wait until we get back to my quarters," Cherek suggested. "Now, we have to—what's the sub-agenda, Livintius?"

"Item One, enter the building without being seen. Two, eliminate anyone who sees us. Does that mean we get to kill them?"

"If absolutely necessary."

Livintius offered a sigh of satisfaction. "Three, determine which quarters belong to Zazana Renkel. Four, proceed to that set of quarters. Five, enter those quarters. Six, determine whether Renkel is there. And now we branch. If she's there—"

"That's enough for now," Cherek said. "Let's start on the operational details. Entering without being detected."

"There she is," said Mapper.

"We could pretend to be comlink repairers," Tinian said. "We'll need to acquire service uniforms. We'd enter the lobby and tell the security personnel that Renkel has reported a comlink outage."

"So he calls her on his comlink, and she denies it," Livintius said.

Cherek shook his head. "Back it up a step. Before that, we kill the power to the building so the comlink outage is plausible."

Tinian considered. "Then we'd need to be power-grid repairers, wouldn't we?"

"There she is," Mapper said again. He was pointing through the airspeeder's transparisteel windscreen. A woman, tall, lean, and dark-haired, dressed in a dark blue uniform with orange trim, was thirty meters from the front of the building and approaching it at a rapid walk.

"Yes, yes," Cherek said. "Livintius, when she goes in, you can strike Item Six and the 'she's not home yet' branch. Now, how do we get to the building's power controls?"

"But we can grab her now," Joram said.

"What, and spoil the plan?"

Joram growled to himself, a credible imitation of a holodrama rancor. "Mapper, go get her, standard talk and pop."

"Thank you," Mapper said. The relief in his voice suggested he'd been given a reprieve from a death sentence. He hit the button beside him, and the airspeeder door slid up and out of the way.

"Wait, wait," Cherek said.

Mapper didn't wait. He unstrapped himself in an instant, untangled himself from Tinian's grip in another, and moved toward the woman.

Joram took a look around. There were pedestrians on this walkway and others on the one opposite, but none within forty or fifty meters. He drew his Intelligence-issued blaster—his primary weapon, not the holdout weapon—and switched it over to its stun setting.

"You can't do this," Cherek said. "You can't just jettison the plan we spent so much time creating. That way lies anarchy and confusion."

"He's right, you know," Tinian said.

"You're demonstrating a marked tendency toward rebellion and aggression," Livintius said.

Tinian looked thoughtful. "A dietary imbalance could be contributing to your bad attitude, Joram."

Joram ignored them. Over on the walkway, Mapper and the woman now stood together. Mapper gestured up and down the landspeeder lane like a lost tourist, a role he'd played before. Joram steadied his blaster in the viewport frame of the aircar and squeezed the trigger.

A blast of light sizzled across to strike the woman in the torso. She

jerked in a full-body spasm and began to fall backward.

Mapper caught her, swinging her arm up over his shoulders, tucking her in close to him as though she were a close friend who'd had too much to drink. Still talking, Mapper hauled her back toward the airspeeder.

Joram lowered his blaster out of sight and took stock of the potential witnesses. Several of them had obviously heard the noise of the blaster and were looking around. Two, not far away, were staring at Mapper and the unconscious woman in some confusion. But there was no visual evidence to convince them that a crime was being committed. "Tinian, you need to be in the front seat."

"Right." She snapped out of what looked like a momentary trance. She slid out Mapper's door and moved around to stand beside the front passenger door. "Livintius, let me in."

The aged Falleen opened it and stood as Mapper reached the airspeeder. "This is very irregular—"

"Gunnery seat!" Tinian said. Her face was suddenly alight with a victorious smile.

"Oh, blast you." Livintius got back into the airspeeder and slid over to take the middle seat. Tinian hopped in beside him, looking smug.

Mapper levered the unconscious woman in through the open door. Joram dragged her in beside him; Mapper crowded in and sealed the door. "Ready to go," Joram said.

With a snarl, Cherek returned his attention to the controls. In a moment they were airborne. "Joram, I'm going to report your insubordination and insolence to our superior as soon as we get back to the safe house. And you'll be shipped out of here with a black mark on your record. Or you can promise not to countermand my explicit orders, or the explicit plans worked up by this committee, ever again. What's it going to be?"

"So my experience and initiative, which have saved you hours and limited danger to this unit, don't mean anything to you."

"No, they don't. You're not our intellectual equal. Your experience is obviously irrelevant and your initiative is nothing but rebellion. Now, you can obey or go home in disgrace. What's it going to be?"

Joram set his jaw. He wanted Cherek to send him home. It might keep him from getting killed.

But then Cherek, Tinian, and Livintius would foul up their mission, and they would be caught or killed. Maybe Mapper, too. Cherek hadn't said anything about sending Mapper back. And if he ordered Mapper to stay, the loyal and determined clone trooper might just feel obligated to obey.

"Well?" Cherek repeated.

Finally Joram was able to work his jaw again. "All right," he said. "I promise."

"Not good enough. I want your word of honor. Repeat my instructions back to me so we're all on the same item on the agenda."

Cherek's neck looked very vulnerable. Joram could reach up, give the man's head a twist, and snap it. He had been taught how.

Every word was like a stone he had to cough up from his guts. "All right. I give my word of honor that I will not countermand your direct orders or the agreed-upon plans of this . . . committee."

"Good enough," Cherek said. "For now."



"I don't know where he is," the woman protested.

She was in one of the chairs in Cherek's rented quarters, and just binding her there had been quite a feat. The billowy furniture had no loops, holes, distinct legs or other components that would permit ropes to be firmly attached, so instead of ropes they'd had to use broad silver binder-tape. Layer upon layer of the stuff adhered her limbs to the furniture. More layers crossed her forehead, holding her head back against the puffy headrest.

Zazana Renkel was a good-looking woman, Joram decided, not holo-drama beautiful, but every-man-working-with-her-would-gravitate-to-her attractive, with dark brown eyes and a manner of expressing herself that suggested intelligence. She was doing what she could to hide the fact that she was very afraid.

Of course she was afraid. Joram would be afraid, too, if he were being interrogated by five masked lunatics.

The masks were cheap rubber things Livintius had bought. They all bore the same face, a broad set of male features marked with horizontal bands of war paint in red, yellow, and black. Livintius had said that they commemorated a hero from Tarhassan melodramas. So in addition to everything else, the spies were interrogating the woman with the face of one of the local cultural icons.

"Don't pretend you didn't know Edbit was with Republic Intelligence," Cherek said.

Renkel's eyes opened wide. "What?"

Joram sighed silently. In his peripheral vision, he saw Mapper begin to bang his head on the wall.

"We don't much care for liars, you know," Cherek drew a deep breath and expelled it as if banishing the demons of petty irritation. "But we might forgive you if you tell us where you're interrogating him."

"I don't—I didn't—I really don't—"

"Oh, come on," Cherek said. "Don't tell me you didn't get lots of praise and a big bonus for bringing in the sole Republic Intelligence agent on your planet."

"But—"

Joram grabbed Cherek by his shirt and yanked, hauling the man down the short hall and into the ground-floor bedroom. Cherek uttered a protracted "Hey..." as he was drawn along.

Joram slid the door shut behind the two of them and pulled his mask off. He tried very hard to keep his voice reasonable. "Cherek, do you know what you just did wrong?"

Cherek pulled his own mask off. His face was flushed, but it looked as though he was merely overheated from the mask. "You're walking dangerously close to insubordination again."

"No, I'm within the parameters of my promise. Listen. In the course of this interrogation, you've given her more information than you've received. If she didn't know before that Teeks was Intelligence, she does now. And even if she did, she might not have known that he was the only Intelligence officer on-world... and she does now. You see?"

Cherek considered. "Uh... damn."

"So when we go out there again, either I can take over the questioning—"

"Or I can continue, implementing your suggestions. Which is what we'll do. Thank you." The last two words sounded slightly less grudging than usual.

Joram turned away, put his mask back on, and slid the door open again.

In the main room, Renkel was saying, "So Tarhassan rates only one Intelligence officer? Total? I mean, not even support personnel?"

Livintius, his voice soothing, said, "Don't take it so hard, young lady. I'm sure you're really a very dangerous world at heart. There are five more now; is that better?"

Behind Joram, Cherek said, "Livintius, you idiot."

Everyone in the room turned to look at him. Joram, seeing Mapper's eyes widen behind his eye-slits, also turned.

Cherek's face was now flushed with anger as well as heat. Joram could see this because the man's mask was still in his hand.

Cherek charged forward, grabbed Livintius by the arm, and hauled him back into the bedroom. Tinian followed.

Mapper put his head into his hands. His shoulders shook as he tried to repress sobs.

Joram returned to the bedroom and listened to Cherek repeat Joram's own words of a moment ago.

As Cherek reached the end of the spiel and took a breath, Joram said, "And there's another problem. Now she's seen your face and heard Livintius' name."

"Eh?" Cherek looked at him, then glanced at the mask still in his hand. "Oh. Yes, that is a problem."

"She can identify us," Livintius said. He sounded breathless. He pulled off his own mask. His eyes were shining. "We have to kill her."

"Wait, no," Tinian said.

Cherek looked uncomfortable. "I don't know."

"We're not going to get anything more out of her," Livintius said. "She's tough. Let's kill her now."

"That's not right," Tinian said.

"Not a good idea," Joram said. "You and she both belong to the same intelligence community, even though you're on opposite sides right now. But in six months, five years, you may be working together... or you may be on opposite sides but have a common enemy. You'll need to have relationships with people in the trade you can trust—within limits. People you know won't kill unnecessarily."

Livintius shook his head, vigorous in his new desire. "This is absolutely necessary," he said. "She can endanger our mission and our departure from this world. We have to kill her. Kill kill kill."

**She can endanger
our mission and
our departure
from this world.
We have to kill her.**

Cherek's troubled expression cleared. "I hate to say it, but Livintius is right."

"Have you ever killed a prisoner of war?" Joram asked.

"Well," Cherek said, "of course I've killed. I am very—"

"Proficient in the combat arts," Livintius and Tinian said.

Cherek glared at them.

"But have you ever killed a prisoner?" Joram continued. "Someone who is helpless?"

"No."

Livintius and Tinian also shook their heads.

"Do you want to?"

"Well, it's not ... sporting," Cherek said.

"Though it would be interesting to watch," Livintius said.

"Then leave it to Mapper." Joram looked toward the living room as if he could see through the intervening walls. "He's a merciless killer. He'll not only eliminate her, he'll dispose of her in such a way that they'll never find the body. He's very fond of construction sites and duracrete foundations."

"Ah," both men said, new wisdom and respect in their voices. Tinian said nothing. She glared at all of them.

Joram put his mask back on.

"No need for that now," said Cherek.

"Yes, there is. If we all three go out there with our masks off, she'll know that we intend to kill her. She's a cunning PlanSec operative, remember?"

"Oh, right," Cherek nodded in confused agreement.

When they returned to the main chamber, Mapper was kneeling beside Renkel's chair. She was talking. "... snatched him off the street. I was walking home as usual and couldn't catch up to their speeder. I don't know why he was taken. And I don't know why you've taken me. I'm only a civilian employee. I don't have access to any important information. I do statistical analyses of criminal activity databases."

"Ooh," Livintius whispered. "Now I'm sorry we have to kill her. The conversations we could have—"

"Shhhh," Cherek cautioned.

"So," Renkel continued, "he couldn't just have been using me. There would be no point to it, would there? I think he loved me. I know I love him." There was desperation in her voice, and she stared into Mapper's half-concealed eyes as if seeking affirmation in them.

"I suspect you're right," Mapper said. "I mean, the most he could get from you would be—what? Identification documents that would get him into your building?" Renkel nodded, and Mapper continued, "And if that was all he wanted, then he'd have taken it and left you. Correct?"

"Yes!" There was relief in her voice.

"So I'm sure his feelings for you were genuine," Mapper said.

"Do you think he's hurt?" she asked.

Livintius said, "Probably being tortured. Do you think he'd stand up well to torture?"

"We don't torture people!"

"Of course you do," Livintius shot back. "Everyone but the Republic tortures captives."

"He's kidding," Joram said. "You'd know better than we would, right?"

Renkel nodded again.

Mapper, his voice soothing, continued, "So he's been locked up, and he's fine, and he's waiting for this war to be over so he can rejoin you. It's as simple as that."

Renkel let out a long sigh of relief. "How much longer are you going to hold me?"

Joram moved around behind her and silently drew his blaster. He checked to make sure that it was still on its stun setting.

"Not long," Mapper said. "You've been very cooperative."

Joram aimed. Mapper stepped back and away from the woman. Joram shot her again and watched the balloonlike chair convulse as the shock hit her system.

"It might be better to kill her now," Livintius said, his voice breathy. He pulled his mask free.

The others followed suit. Joram shook his head. "Forensics might detect minute traces of carbonized flesh in this chamber if we did. Better to kill her well away from here."

Mapper stared at him, wide-eyed. Joram allowed a sinister smile to play across his lips. "Like those guys we took out to get into the space-craft bay on Pengalan. We'll do the same to her ... only worse."

Mapper thought about it and his expression cleared. They'd done nothing more than hammer those two men unconscious and leave them tied up. "So I'll need ..."

"Just a blaster pistol ... and the medical bag," Joram tried to make the two words sound as though they'd originated in some mythological hell. In his peripheral vision, he saw Tinian shudder. Livintius smiled.

"I'll come with you as backup," Joram continued, "if the boss permits. I expect the three of them will all be needed to work out the operational details for the next step of the plan."

"Right," Mapper said.

"What is our next step?" Livintius asked.

"Teeks was snatched by PlanSec," Cherek said. "Without question. So we need to plan a rescue raid on the main PlanSec building here in the capital. They wouldn't imprison him in any place less important."



"We're working for idiots," Mapper said. "And you promised to do everything they said." He was in control of the airspeeder, maneuvering it at legal rates along well-posted sky-routes above Nehass.

Joram shook his head. "I promised to obey Cherek's orders and the dictates of their horrible committee. I didn't promise to do anything else they said. I didn't promise not to figure out how to get them to do what I want ... which I have. And I didn't promise not to do things on my own. Speaking of which ..." He opened up his datapad. "I'm bringing up a map. I want you to drop me off there."

"Beam it to the nav computer. What is it?"

"Edbit Teeks' home. I'm going to give it a close look while you make Renkel comfortable. That trio of irredeemables thinks that Teeks had no local resources, which is an impossibility I need to disprove. When you're done, come back for me."

Mapper smiled. "Now I feel better."

Mapper dropped Joram off a short distance from the housing tower that had been Edbit Teeks' public address. Mapper returned to the air as soon as Joram sealed the door. It wouldn't do to remain on the ground long enough for a pedestrian to see the woman-shaped disposal bag stretched across the back seat. Renkel, under the influence of the sedatives from the medical bag, would remain asleep for hours, perhaps the better part of a day. Mapper would find a place to conceal her where she was likely to remain undiscovered until hours past the Intelligence

team's departure from Tarhassan. Joram would ensure that the team would leave before tomorrow was very old.

Teeks' building was shorter and broader than Renkel's. Its duracrete face, stippled and dyed to resemble natural stone, was dark from age. The north face, thick with balconies, overlooked a park. No one walked in the park, and guardsmen, dressed in the fluttery orange-and-gold livery of Tarhassan's armed forces, stood watchfully in the northeast and southwest corners. The west face, which was where the primary building entrance was located, had no balconies, but many broad viewports gave its residents a fine look down at the landspeeder lane below.

The building lobby was unguarded, wall sensors permitting access to its turbolifts. Renkel's pockets had yielded up a transparisteel cylinder containing many of the planet's coin-shaped magnetic access disks, and when Joram held the cylinder up to a sensor, the turbolift doors opened.

Teeks' quarters were on the sixth floor. His door, a powered slider, was sealed by a magnetic coupler marked "Planetary Security." Joram took a moment to assure himself that no one was moving down the floor's hallway, then went to work disengaging the coupler. This was one of many skills he'd acquired since joining Republic Intelligence, and the coupler, designed to keep the mildly curious out or alert security forces if the very curious forced their way through, soon disengaged. Then Renkel's cylinder of disks gave him access to the darkened interior.

The quarters were lightly furnished. The fact that there wasn't much furniture meant that there was not much wreckage to clean up; someone had put the place through an amateurish and destructive search. The two sofa-chairs in the main room, one a single and the other a double-wide, had been slashed open, their stuffing pulled free; no longer restrained by the chair coverings, the stuffing had swelled to three times or more its normal volume, making portions of the room look like an artificial fungus forest. The thick green foam-carpet on the floor contributed to the impression.

The table between the exterior viewport and the narrower sofa-chair had been knocked down. A table lamp with a distinctive swing-out glowrod arm was on the floor, toppled but intact. In the bedchamber, the plush, freestanding mattress had been shredded, and its swollen contents made the chamber appear to be full of the primordial ancestors

of the main chamber's fungal growths.

The wreckage held little interest for Joram. It would have been thoroughly sifted through by PlanSec. It was not likely there would be anything for him to find. In fact, he was looking for one crucial thing the security forces were less likely to detect, and he'd already seen it.

From the bedchamber, he recovered an intact low table. He positioned this beside the front viewport, put the lamp atop it, swung the arm out so that the glowrod was directly in front of the transparisteel, and switched the lamp on. The glowrod was still intact, and suddenly the main chamber was illuminated.

The light was risky. There might still be security personnel on duty watching this place.

The lamp was a signalling device, used in a standard procedure to signal an agent's local resources. It was plausibly a reading lamp; Teeks could sit in the sofa-chair beside the viewport, keep the lamp arm near him, and read. But when circumstances called for it, he'd swing the arm out so that it shone in the viewport, as Joram had just done.

Joram sat in the ruined chair. He drew his blaster and waited.



A knock, light and tentative, awoke Joram. He reached over to turn the glowrod off, then called, "It's not sealed."

The hallway door opened. A diminutive male stood there, his silhouetted features indistinct. He moved in quickly, letting the door slide shut behind him. "Greetings," the man said, his voice deep, out of proportion to his small stature. "I'm not sure I have the correct building. I've come about the rental quarters?"

"No need for a cover story," Joram said. "The lamp signal was deliberate. You're a local working with Teeks. What do I call you?"

The silhouette sagged just a little, perhaps in relief. "Tharb."

"I don't think I've run into that name before."

"It's not a name. It's a code name. It's a bug. A Tarhassan bug."

"Ah. How long has it been since you've been compensated?"

"Since Teeks was taken."

With his free hand, Joram fished around in a pocket and brought up some credchips, generic ones he'd exchanged for gold at the spaceport, not traceable to him. He calculated their value against what he knew were standard rates for local informer services and put two of them on the table with the lamp. "You can have these when I'm gone."

"Thank you."

"Why was Teeks taken?"

Tharb shrugged. "PlanSec investigators showed up at the restaurant, Corgan's Gustatorium, where I usually make exchanges with him. I happened to be there."

You work there, Joram decided. Now I can find you again.

"They asked very specific questions about his visits to the restaurant, about anyone he might have met there regularly."

But no one could remember any patron he met regularly. And since you're free, no one remembered that you were his regular server.

"I raced over here as soon as I could get free, but I was delayed by circumstances."

You had to wait until your shift was over,

"And I saw them take him."

Joram considered. "By any chance, did you follow them when they took him away?"

He had to find some way to accompany her into the PlanSec buildings. Otherwise, she was not likely to get out alive.

"Yes, I did."

Joram added another two credchips to the little pile on the table. *Either you sold him out and risked nothing by following them, or you're a daring resource and we badly want to keep you.* "Where did they take him?"

"The main office of Planetary Security, downtown."

Joram managed to keep an expression of dismay off his face—an irrelevant effort, since his visitor couldn't see his features in the dark. Cherek, for all the wrong reasons, had been right about where Teeks was. It was going to hurt like hell to admit that. "Is there anything you can tell me about that building?"

"I can give you partial plans. Main entrance, interrogation areas, holding areas. Nothing about the vehicle bays, computer areas, anything like that."

You're an ex-convict who's been there as a prisoner and are now working as a food server, Joram thought. "Good. On your datapad?"

"On my datapad."

Joram brought out his own datapad. "Beam it over."



Joram and Mapper reentered Cherek's quarters some three hours after they'd left. Mapper, coached in the role he was now to play, kept his features cold and still. Cherek, Tinian, and Livintius regarded the two of them with expressions mixing admiration with dread. Tinian's manner was weighted more toward horror as she watched Mapper. Joram smiled. Their expressions would really become alarmed if they knew that the supposed victim lay wrapped in blankets in the utilities shed of an abandoned construction site, sleeping off her drug-induced stupor.

"It's done," Joram said.

"About time. I hope Joram didn't slow you down too much, Mapper." Cherek gestured at the chamber's table, which now was only half-covered with snack food. The other half was littered with sheets of flimsi covered in hand-scrawled notes. "We do have a plan for the next stage of the investigation. Voted on, sealed, and approved."

"Sorry we didn't wait for you," Livintius said. "But we were all in agreement—"

"And with three voting in unison, our votes weren't needed," Joram said. "But I have some news. I hope it doesn't interfere with your operational plans."

Cherek looked offended by the possibility. "What news?"

"The Renkel woman confessed all before the poison took hold." Joram offered up a shudder at the pretended memory. "She admitted that she'd turned in her lover to PlanSec. He's being interrogated at the main facility. You were right all along, Cherek."

"I knew that."

"So what's our plan?" Mapper asked.

"Well, there are holes in it," Cherek said. There was weary admission in his voice. "And until we plug them, we can't launch our rescue. For instance, we need to know the layout of the building."

"Oh, I have that," Mapper said. "It was on Renkel's datapad. Just the section of the building she was familiar with. The cells and interrogation areas, mostly."

Cherek came half up out of his chair. "You still have that?"

"Of course. I took all her personal effects to dispose of separately. They're still in the speeder."

Cherek's smile suggested that he was ready to adopt Mapper and

make him his heir. "Good work, Livintius, fill him in."

The academic Falleen preened, happy to be the center of attention. "Item One, Sub-Item A, Summary: Rescue Edbit Teeks from Planetary Security Building. Sub-Item B, Resources. The five of us, one rental airspeeder, this set of rented quarters, personal weapons and gear. Mapper, do you have explosives?"

"I do. We have only half a dozen shaped charges, though, all I could smuggle in."

"That might do. . . . Sub-Item C, Procedures. Dress one of us in simulated PlanSec uniform. That one accomplishes entry into PlanSec building, makes his way to an unobserved exterior portal, and admits the others. Seize PlanSec personnel and force them to lead the way to Teeks' cell. Force open Teeks' cell. Exit building; necessary improvisation here. Exit vicinity. Make immediate trip to spaceport for extraction."

"And now that we have a real, not simulated, PlanSec uniform," Cherek said, "we know who's going to perform the initial intrusion. If you're up to it, Tinian. You're the only one even close to Renkel's size."

Tinian considered, then nodded. "I'll do it. That woman gave her life so that Teeks could be rescued. I'm not going to let that be a waste."

Her tone surprised Joram. Renkel's supposed death had obviously shattered her naiveté. *There may be some hope for you after all,* he decided.

But he had to find some way to accompany her into the PlanSec buildings. Otherwise, she was not likely to get out alive.



In what elsewhere was the quietest hour before the golden-orange Tarhassan dawn, the landspeeder lane in front of the Planetary Security building was busy with a shift change.

Tinian gulped, exited the airspeeder, and mingled with the crowd. She marched up the green duracrete stairs to the building's arched entrance. Closely following Mapper's instructions, she walked fast but not conspicuously so, her attention apparently on the datapad in her hand.

As she neared the main entryway, she held up Renkel's identity disk, waving it with simulated unconcern in front of the sensor, and passed into the lobby.

There was no alarm, no outcry, no sudden surge of officers toward the lobby. Joram, in the back seat, realized that he was holding his breath. Finally he let it out.

"No matter how many times you do this, it's never easy, huh?" asked Cherek. His tone suggested that he was one weary veteran talking to another.

Joram gestured toward the entrance. "Let's stay here to see if anything bad happens."

"No, let's get to our waiting point." Cherek put the airspeeder in motion, moving a block down the landspeeder lane, pulling it to the streetside around the first corner.

Cherek's comlink beeped, indicating an incoming signal. He pulled it from its clip on his lapel. "This is Grimtaash-One, go."

Tinian's voice, hushed, came across the comlink's tiny speaker: "I'm in the basement."

"That was fast. Basement? You're supposed to be headed toward the cell block."

"I found out my identity disk doesn't get me into the secure hall to the building's interior. But I saw a worker coming out of a door to the

basement near the hall access. I kept the door from closing and he didn't notice. There's no one down here. I can move around without being seen."

"Tinian," Cherek's voice was a pained whine. "That ... wasn't ... the plan."

"I know, I'm sorry. That was all I could do."

Cherek's lips moved silently, and Joram recognized that the man was counting to ten again. This time Cherek got to fifteen before he said, "What about accesses?"

"I've found one door frame already, but it's blocked with a duracrete slab. It's hard to move around down here. It's all caged areas filled with boxes of what I think is old evidence and files." They heard a quiet, high-pitched sneeze over the comlink. "Sorry. Dusty, too."

"Let me know when you've got something we can use. Grimtaash-One, out." Cherek replaced the comlink on his lapel, then looked confused. "Did I call her Grimtaash-Two, or by her name, the first time?"

Mapper said, "Her name."

Cherek began counting again.



"I have a door," Cherek's lapel whispered. "It's heavy metal and it has all sorts of monitoring devices on it."

Cherek undipped the comlink again. "Good, good. I'm going to give you to Mapper. Maybe Mapper can talk you through disabling them. Mapper's a good agent."

Mapper asked Tinian questions about the security array on the door, then began providing detailed instructions on how to deal with the devices. Joram half-listened but kept most of his attention on the surrounding speeders and pedestrians. Traffic was increasing, and four people sitting for a protracted period in a parked airspeeder would eventually become conspicuous.

"I think I've got it," Tinian said. "The last display is green now. It reads 'Clear.'"

"Good job," Mapper said. "I'm giving you back to the boss." He handed the comlink over. "The door's about halfway along the north wall. She hears speeder traffic, so it's exterior."

"We're coming for you, Grimtaash-Two," Cherek said. He exited the

airspeeder. Mapper and Joram followed. Livintius scooted over to be behind the controls. He had been thrilled to be made the speeder-man, the unit's getaway specialist, for this operation.

On the short walk over, Cherek said, "Now, how do we get from the basement to the cell block?"

They walked in silence for a minute while Joram formulated his response. Finally he said, "I have an idea—a partial idea, anyway. But there's a problem with it that I just can't work out. So it probably won't succeed."

"Probably not," Cherek agreed. "Let's hear it."

"We have Livintius watch the front entrance for a few minutes. At the point a unit of PlanSec agents brings in one or more prisoners, we have Tinian and another one of us stand by at the basement door, peeking out. She and the other fall in behind the agents and their prisoner, and see if they can get into the secure hall on their shirrtails. Livintius can run back to the speeder then."

"Ah," Cherek said. "But Tinian's the only one of us in uniform. Even if they let her in, why would they let the other one in?"

"He's her prisoner, see. Hands bound behind his back, he puts on a perpetrator face ... you know."

Cherek nodded, considering. "So what's the insoluble problem with this plan?"

"Well, of the three of us, none of us is dumb enough looking, or disreputable enough looking, to pass as a criminal."

"Ah," Cherek thought about that as they turned the corner, crossed the narrow traffic lane between the security building and the building adjacent to it, and reached what had to be the access to Tinian's door—a flight of duracrete steps descending into shadow. The three of them looked around, making sure that no one was watching, and trotted down the stairs.

Cherek said, "Joram, it's time for you to redeem yourself. I'm sure you can pull off that role. It's almost no acting required."

Joram made his voice light, his tone naive. "You really think so?"

"I do," Cherek clapped him on the shoulder, then rapped on the door.



Her hand on the small of his back, occasionally shoving to propel him forward, Tinian kept Joram close behind the trio of uniformed PlanSec agents and their prisoner, a spindly woman who persisted in complaining that she'd divorced the man, that he was now remarried on Corellia, that she had no Republic leanings.

The secure portions of the building seemed packed with PlanSec agents, all energetic, all discussing the war to come. Snatches of defense plans, evacuation plans, and retaliation plans drifted past. Joram knew that he had to be pallid and sweating but decided that it would merely lend authenticity to his role.

Then they were past the first set of offices and cross-corridors, leaving most of the crowd behind.

A uniformed officer up ahead—tall, balding, with a build like an athlete twenty years younger than his apparent age—noticed them.

"What'ya got there, guardswoman?"

"Prisoner delivery," Tinian said. "From Dandahass, that's my station. This guy was named by one of your prisoners and wants to work a deal. He's a Republic Intelligence contact."

"One of our prisoners?" The officer eyed Joram speculatively. Joram

**The charge blew,
hurling metal
fragments all along
the corridor.**

held his gaze for a moment but then broke eye contact as if unable to withstand the man's stare.

They were close enough now to the man that Tinian could drop her tone. "Yes, your guy is..." She consulted her datapad, unnecessarily. "Edbit Teeks. This one, Varpo Prabb, admits to being his main connection among native Tarhassians."

"Good, good." The officer gestured for them to follow, then led them down the corridor. "Teeks. Fine work. Come into my office."

Joram and Tinian followed, Joram taking as fast an impression as he could of the office. He saw a semi-opaque viewport for privacy, chairs that seemed skeletal compared to all the others he'd encountered here, a desk heaped with stacks of reports, datachips, odd-shaped knickknacks.

For the moment, they were out of sight of anyone in the hallway, Tinian drew her blaster—Renkel's blaster. "Don't move."

The officer froze. Joram could see him calculating—was it worth it to shout and warn his fellows when it might mean death? Was there any chance this woman would hesitate, not fire at all?

Joram knelt the officer in the groin, putting all his mass into it. The officer folded forward. His groan was loud enough to carry, but the noise from the hallway was also loud. Joram twisted his wrists out of the bonds loosely wrapped around them and tapped the wall button; the door slid shut with a whoosh. Then he took a metal model of a PlanSec corvette from the desktop and brought it down on the back of the man's head. It took three blows, but the officer finally fell unconscious.

"Joram, I'm not sure I'm fit to do this," Tinian said. Her voice was shaky. She looked at the blaster in her hand as if puzzling out what to do with it next. "I'm not a killer like you and Mapper."

"We're not killers like us, either," Joram weighed matters. Compartmentalizing information was usually a good idea, but not when it caused distrust among allies one depended on for survival. "The Renkel woman is still alive."

"What?"

"She is. Cherek and Livintius don't know. Listen, you're doing fine. Get this man's restraints from his belt clip and bind him. Then gag him." Joram reached down to pull the man's datapad from his belt pouch. "Let's find Teeks."



At this hour, the second-floor cell and interrogation area were lightly guarded and trafficked. Tinian, again working her prisoner-delivery story, put Joram in front of an outer-perimeter guard, then an inner-perimeter guard. Each time, while pretending to hand the guard her datapad with the documents on her prisoner, she lured the guard into reaching through the bars for it. Joram grabbed each man in turn, dragged him into the bars, and held him there while Tinian stunned him with Renkel's blaster. Then the identity disk of the officer they'd captured downstairs gave them access into the detention area beyond.

Finally, they stood outside the cell marked with the number that corresponded to Teeks. Joram could see through the transparisteel panel in the door; a middle-aged man of medium build, a light and unkempt beard on his face, dressed in prisoner pastel violet, was asleep on the cell's bunk. On the far wall, a high viewport admitted exterior light. Joram waved the officer's identity disk in front of the door sensor, but its readout remained resolutely red.

Joram keyed his comlink. "Grimtaash-Five to One, come in."

"This is Grimtaash-Four." It was Mapper's voice.

"Four, where's One?"

"Asleep."

Joram grinned. "How'd that happen?"

"I didn't make him any promises, Five. He bumped his head."

"Right. We're just outside the pickup point. We're going to need a distraction as soon as possible. A big, loud one. Do that, then exit. We'll be coming out on the north face, too. Three, are you ready to stand by?"

"Moving into position." Livintius's voice was unnaturally high. "What do you mean, he's sleeping?"

"Well, he's waking up. Still a bit groggy. And he's going to be mad. I'll be ready with your distraction in thirty seconds."

"Set it off, don't wait for further instructions." Joram pocketed his comlink, then began setting up his explosive charge on the cell door.

Moments later, there was a muffled boom from below. It seemed to have little effect. There was a faint vibration in the floor, but there were no shrieks, no rattling of ceilings and walls, no cascades of duracrete dust from above.

Then the sirens started. They were shrill whooping noises, a constant cycle of auditory pain. The comlink Joram had stolen from the unconscious officer blared with its own message: "Intruders, basement level. We've had an explosion event. Repeat, an explosion event."

Suddenly there was a face on the other side of the viewport: Teeks, awake but sleepy, confused. Joram keyed the comlink on the door.

"Teeks, get against the far wall, cover yourself with your mattress."

Teeks nodded and disappeared.

Joram set the timer on his charge, then he and Tinian withdrew along the corridor and around the first corner. Faces now filled most of the cell viewports. Some of these men and women were hammering, others talking, some pleading with nothing but their expressions. Joram ignored them.

He and Tinian were barely in place when the charge blew, hurling metal fragments all along the corridor. They rushed back into the cell.

Teeks rose from behind his improvised barrier. "Tell me this is a rescue."

"This is a rescue," Joram said. "I'm Joram. This is Tinian." He slapped his other explosive charge on the exterior wall just beside Teeks' knees. He set the timer for thirty seconds. "Tinian, cover the hallway."

Teeks moved away from the new explosive. He took his mattress with him. "Do you know anything about my girlfriend? Is she under suspicion? Under arrest?"

"No, she's not. She's safe." Joram moved away from the explosive, watched its timer count down, and something clicked into place for him. *Renkel should be under suspicion. The fact that she's not suggests that PlanSec is certain that she's innocent. Which they shouldn't. Unless they have inside information about Teeks' personal life and knew she wasn't part of his team. But how would they know that and yet not know to pick up contacts like Tharb?*

An agent would include personal details in his reports, but keep information about his resources, his contacts, secret.

So PlanSec has access to information from Teeks' reports to his intelligence superior. Maybe to the reports themselves.

Tinian said, "Five."

"What?"

"Four," she said.

"Oh." Joram joined her and Teeks behind the mattress.

"Three. Two. One."

The wall blew out, this explosion sending duracrete dust into the air—mostly outward. Before the echoes had faded, Joram ran forward and peered out through the hole.

Below, the walkway and landspeeder lane were littered with chunks of duracrete. Cherek's rented airspeeder was parked twenty meters off to the right, directly in front of the basement doorway access. Mapper and Cherek, the latter staggering slightly, were already emerging from the stairwell.

"Are you fit for a one-story drop?" Joram asked. He had to shout; his hearing wasn't what it should be, and he assumed that the hearing of his companions was similarly affected.

"Rather too late to ask," Teeks shouted. "But yes."

"After you," Tinian shouted.

Joram slid feet-first through the hole, its broken edges scraping across his back, and dropped. He landed on the unyielding walkway and continued his motion into a forward roll, a little clumsy—his back would be bruised tomorrow. But it was better than having a broken ankle or twisted knee. He stood.

Teeks hit the walkway behind him, rolled nimbly to his feet, and gestured up for Tinian to follow.

Ahead, Mapper, on the street side of the airspeeder, and Cherek, on the walkway side, had its doors open.

Then a uniformed PlanSec officer, a young man with dark hair, leaped as if catapulted up from the basement stairway and planted his blaster in Cherek's side. Even with his diminished hearing, Joram could hear the man's shout of "Do not move!"

Joram grimaced. It was amateur against amateur. No well-trained guardsman with a blaster would get that close to a perpetrator. And Cherek didn't have the sense to—

Cherek raised his hands as if to surrender, then made a move to knock the blaster aside.

The guardsman fired. Cherek, his chest smoking, a surprised look on his face, fell. The guardsman adjusted his aim toward Mapper and Livintius.

Tinian's blaster shot struck him across the neck and shoulders. The man jerked and fell.

Mapper had Cherek in the back seat before Joram and the others

reached the airspeeder. Livintius had the airspeeder in motion before they'd dogged the doors closed.

And they had a kilometer between them and the PlanSec building before the first security speeder left the building.



Mapper straightened from beside Cherek's bed. They were back in the dubious and temporary security of Cherek's chambers. "I think he'll live," Mapper said.

But Cherek did not respond to the hopeful pronouncement; his chest bandaged, his eyes closed, he remained in the sleep of the badly injured.

Teeks rose from the room's puffy chair. "I don't mean to sound ungrateful, but you'd better get off-world before they have enough information to catch you."

"We can't leave him," Livintius said. He continued to eye Joram with suspicion, as if Joram had shot Cherek by remote control.

"Yes, you can," Teeks said. "Get him into the speeder and I'll take him to a safe house. I have safe houses, cover identities, money accounts all over."

Livintius shook his head. "They're bound to be compromised. By your dead lover."

"Zazana doesn't know anything about my work," Teeks shrugged. "I expect to tell her about it when I propose to her."

Livintius pointed an accusing finger at Joram. "You didn't tell him—" Joram put a finger to his lips to shush the academic.



Joram didn't begin to relax until he could see Tarhassan shrinking in the holocam view on the screen in the transport's main cabin. In minutes, they'd be jumping to hyperspace, headed for a planet that remained neutral as war flared up all around it. From there, they could make their way back to Coruscant. Meanwhile, he'd privately warned Teeks against communicating with Republic Intelligence or accessing accounts he'd mentioned in his reports—at least, not until Joram could form an impression of how Teeks had been exposed.

The sound of tapping distracted him from the screen. He looked over to see Tinian working on her datapad. "What's this?"

She gave him a smile. "My report."

"What?" He looked down at its diminutive screen. "It's not in proper outline format. Nor do I see any contributions from Livintius."

"He can file his own report. In the meantime, mine will become the official truth of the mission to Tarhassan."

"What is the official truth? So my truth matches your truth, that is."

"Cherek planned, Livintius and I researched, you and Mapper executed, all until the big show at the end. Then we all executed and Cherek got shot playing hero. I also mention that Livintius, Cherek, and I could use more training, some mentoring by senior agents. In any case, everybody did good."

"Did well," Joram corrected, absently. "You learn fast."

"I suspect I'm going to need to."

He reached over to shake her hand. "Welcome to Intelligence." 🍌

The wall blew out, this explosion sending duracrete dust into the air.

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REPUBLIC HOLONET NEWS



NEW MON CALAMARI COUNCIL PROMISES REFORM

MORJANSSIK CITY, MON CALAMARI—After months of violence and strained diplomatic relations, the governments of Mon Calamari took steps to move beyond the civil war of last year with the signing of a new accord between the two dominant species of the water planet. Though open hostilities ceased as of 13:9:22—the day a Republic task force destroyed a Separatist-funded Quarren weapons program—the purge of secessionist elements from the ruling Mon Calamari Council has taken a year to accomplish.

Jedi Master Kit Fisto, leader of last year's task force, was in the Quarren city of Morjanssik to oversee the signing of the accord. In a gesture meant to show the significance of the agreement, Quarren Senator Tundra Dowmeia signed the document in his own ink.

"The Quarren Isolation League is no more, and the exploitation of our people will end now," Dowmeia said in his resonating baritone voice to a predominantly Quarren audience. "The new government of Mon Calamari will more properly reflect the will of our planet, not the will of the guilds that grew rich from our work."

"The Quarren who previously sat on the Council did not speak for the dwellers of the surfaces or the depths," Mon Calamari Councilor Kalbrac explained to off-world media. "With the corruption now flensed from this body, the new government will function as a voice for all the planet, Mon Calamari and Quarren alike."

The new accord radically restructures the makeup of the Mon Calamari Council. Though constitutionally mandated to represent the Quarren and Mon Calamari people equally, the Council has for decades been rife with corruption. In planetary affairs and within the Galactic Senate, the last three Senators have had strong ties to the Mining Guild, which perpetuated an isolationist policy to deter competition in the

planet's lucrative deep-sea ore-mining operations.

Though the Mon Calamari support this move, the Quarren see it as yet another blight on Senator Dowmeia's record. "Dowmeia is a tool of the Republic and the Cals," says Ruke Chowall, editor of *Bends*, a Quarren counterculture newsnet popular in Morjanssik. "He's going to sell out our mines to the Mon Cals and open our seas to who-knows-what. Mark my words: Before long, these seas will be bloodied again."

VALORUM MEMORIAL UNVEILED TO TIGHTENED SECURITY

JRADE DISTRICT, CORUSCANT—After repeated delays attributed to the newly heightened Core Worlds Security Act, this afternoon finally saw the unveiling of Finis Valorum Memorial in the Jade District of Galactic City to a meager crowd of fewer than 200 spectators.

The Jade Plaza surrounding the newly commissioned marcluro-stone statue has in the past held tens of thousands of spectators, but today's sparse gathering was dominated instead by the presence of clone troopers and Senate Guard security.

"Of course there should be more people here to pay their respects and remember former Supreme Chancellor Valorum today," said Senator Mon Mothma (Chandria). "But I imagine the nonstop Beta-level security alerts and endless clone patrols are keeping people indoors."

Though a memorial to Finis Valorum had been approved and planned for the Jade Plaza Chancellery Walkway immediately following his death in the terrorist attack of 14:9:19, the plaza's public shutdown for security investigations delayed the unveiling for weeks.

"We've been trying to let people know that the Jade is once again open," said Dassa Borkannits, Director of Communications for the

District. "I guess people are still shaken up by it all."

Senator Bail Organa (Alderaan) read the dedication to Valorum: "In the days following the tragic and cowardly attack that claimed the life of this man, the news of our loss was overshadowed by the security policies that it spawned," said Organa. "But Finis Valorum would never have backed such extreme reactionary measures and would have seen them as affronts to the freedoms he held dear."



CIS SHADOWFEED

"SHEDDING LIGHT ON THEIR LIES"

Ventress Issues New Jedi Bounties

MID-RIM NODE—In Shadowport newsmets and unofficial HoloNet nodes throughout the Mid- and Outer Rims, the newest collection of CIS bounty postings is quickly working its way to independent bounty hunters. This latest update of 82 notices of remandation comes from Commander Asajj Ventress and is dominated by Jedi warrants.

"Hunters of the fringe, I address you on behalf of the Count and the General, leaders of our unyielding cause," said Ventress in the holo-recording that precedes the latest bounty packets. "You've long been used to working outside the system, for you recognize its flaws. Strike back at these outdated enforcers and bureaucrats who seek to govern your livelihood."

On Nar Shaddaa, independent hunters have lined up at pirate HoloNet kiosks to download the latest bounties. As these bounties are posted outside the legislation of the Republic Office of Criminal Investigations, they are viewed as illegal in Republic space, and the typical permit restrictions and zone laws that regulate the bounty hunting trade do not apply.

"An unofficial bounty doesn't have guild fees, taxes, and other creds skimmed off the top," says a Vuvrian hunter who wished not to be named. "There's catches, though. No rules means you get a lot of amateurs stepping in your way. And you get paid in confed-creds."

"It takes a special breed of hunter to nab a Jedi, and the Seps aren't too demanding since they're not asking for live prisoners," said an Aqualish hunter who identified himself as Krag. "You got to watch your back and strike from a distance, or else you'll end up getting Jangoed."



Topping this bounty list are Jedi Generals Mace Windu and Yoda, each valued at 1,250,000 credits. Notable additions and increases to the list include General Obi-Wan Kenobi (350,000 credits), General Ki-Adi-Mundi (350,000 credits), and General Shaak Ti (300,000 credits). The highest-valued non-General is Padawan Anakin Skywalker (225,000 credits), who gained notoriety following his exploits on Skye, Virujansi, and Aargonar.

The new postings packet also includes loyalist politicians influential to the Republic war machine. These include Senator Ask Aak of Malastare (17,000 credits), Senator Orn Free Taa of Ryloth (16,000 credits), and Senator Onaconda Farr of Rodia (25,000 credits). Senator Padmé Amidala of Naboo has the highest bounty of the loyalists, although her extraordinary death mark of 22,000,000 credits comes direct from Viceroy Nute Gunray of the Trade Federation.



Givin Lured to Republic Astrogation Program

DODECAPOLIS, YAG'DHUL—Senator Daggibus Scoritoles of Yag'Dhul confirmed today that the Republic has been covertly recruiting Givin theoretical astrogators into its ranks in what is amounting to an "astrogation race" in the Clone Wars.

"Our internal computations have shown that greater than 125 accredited Givin theorists, including four sanctified mathematicians, have been drafted into companies that are fronts for Republic military operations and are now at work attempting to crack hyperspace speed barriers and compute even faster routes for the enemy," Scoritoles told the Yag'Dhul media. This figure has since been confirmed by the Separatist Council.

"It's not just bigger cannons and faster ships that will win this war," said Techno Union Foreman Wat Tambor. "The importance of leading-edge astrogational data and hyperspatial calculations cannot be overstated. With the correct transdimensional computations, a skilled astrogator could conceivably move a warship across the galaxy in a fraction of the standard duration."

The ruling Body Calculus, the government of Yag'Dhul, has devoted its most talented astrogators to developing newer and faster hyperspace routes for the Confederacy.

Yavin 4 Rebel Base: Main Hangar

by Chris Trevas

Xs and Ys Mark the Spot

» Elstree Studios was home to most of the studio filming for *Star Wars: A New Hope*, but several sets in the production were too large for the suburban London location. Additional space was secured some 20 miles away in the county of Middlesex at Shepperton Studios. The facility's Stage H was the largest soundstage in Europe at the time. It became the staging area for all of the full-size starships, including the full-size half of the *Millennium Falcon* at Mos Eisley and on the Death Star, as well as the Rebel base on the fourth moon of Yavin.

Squadrons of Alliance starfighters were launched from the base's main hangar to take on the incoming Death Star. On the soundstage only a single complete X-wing and a partial Y-wing were constructed. Other ships in the background were merely mockups, flat two-dimensional cutouts painted to look convincing. The X-wing is the only one seen physically lifting off, and that was no easy task, considering it was done on set with a full-size ship weighing five tons. The task of planning the liftoff fell to Mechanical Effects Supervisor John Stears. The roof of the soundstage was unable to bear the weight of the ship, not to mention the three-quarter-ton rigging needed to support it. The crew obviously needed a crane, but with several cameras covering the action from multiple angles, there was no room to fit one within the setting. It was decided a tower crane called a Zealous would be used. Capable of lifting seven tons from a distance of 100 feet, it fit the requirements perfectly. With the crane positioned outside of the stage, the operator had no view of the ship

being lifted and had to rely on a second crane operator supervising from inside and relaying instructions via radio. The crane and its operators worked flawlessly throughout the production, executing precise maneuvers within a fraction of an inch.

Although the ships never truly left the set, we do see them fly over the surrounding jungle canopy on film through visual effects. This exterior view was captured on location by a small second-unit team from ILM consisting of Richard Edlund and Dick Alexander. A production scout brought them to the Mayan ruins at Tikal National Park in Guatemala, where they joined model-maker Lorne Peterson, who decided to take some time out of his vacation. With the help of some locals, the small group erected a guard tower made by the model shop and shot the scenes with a movie camera powered by a car battery. Peterson played the solitary tower guard observing the outgoing ships. 🍷

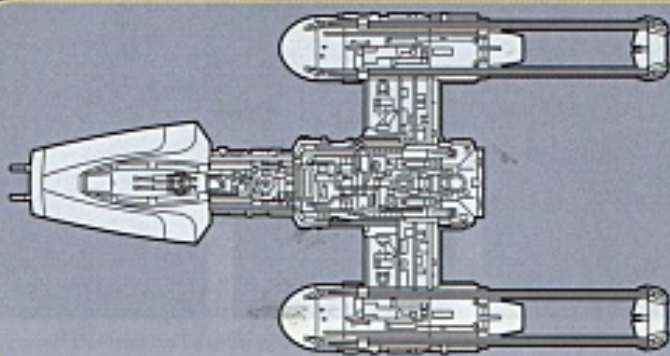


While inspecting the starboard cannons, an astute mechanic points out the laser-cooling sleeve to one of his colleagues.

Power cords for the landing lights could be a tripping hazard.

A brave extra "guides" the liftoff of the five-ton X-wing powered by the offstage crane.





The full-size Y-wing on set was incomplete. It had only a single unattached engine on the port side, and the rear half of the main body was left without detail. A matte painting would complete the ship on film as well as add more ships in the distance.

R2-D2 is rather unceremoniously lifted into position by what looks like a big vacuum hose. A similar device is used in *Return of the Jedi* to pluck him from the sand near the Sarlacc's pit.

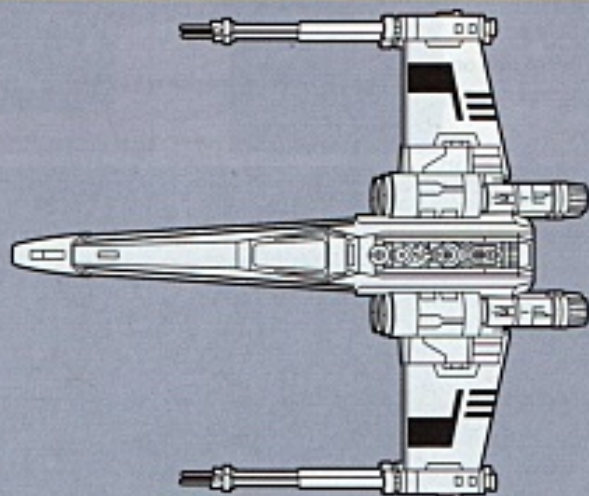


For the most expansive view of the hangar's interior, two separate shots of the set were combined seamlessly with a matte painting by Harrison Ellershaw.

The Incom T-65 X-wing features a proton torpedo launcher on each side of the fuselage. For the assault against the Death Star, Luke was equipped with only a single pair of torpedoes. Those two were all he needed.

Rebel pilots wear several signal flares strapped to one leg. This was a design element taken directly from German pilots of World War II, who strapped belts of flare pistol cartridges in the same position.

Each Rebel pilot helmet displayed its own distinct markings. Though many of the helmets would later be reissued to new pilots in *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, Biggs Darklighter's checkered helmet was never used again.



ILM sent some of their small-scale ship models to serve as reference to construct the larger X-wing and partial Y-wing. Tiny details originally scavenged from plastic model kits for the miniatures were faithfully recreated on their life-size counterparts.



Voronica Whitney-Robinson launched her writing career with fantasy novels published by Wizards of the Coast.



The Fastest Pen in the Galaxy?

by Jason Fry

Voronica Whitney-Robinson Outruns a Fleet of Deadlines

Here are some of the ingredients for whipping up a *Star Wars* instant book: production people who know exactly what has to be done and when; an editor willing to drop everything else when necessary; quick approvals of plot twists from Lucasfilm; and, of course, an author who can do for a manuscript what the *Millennium Falcon* did for the Kessel Run.

Which is where Voronica Whitney-Robinson comes in.

Whitney-Robinson, the author of December's *Star Wars Galaxies: The Ruins of Dantooine* (Del Rey, \$7.50) may be a new-comer to the *Star Wars* universe, but she's earned her stripes as a speedy writer. We're talking Anakin Skywalker's podracer speedy. Lando Calrissian's patter with the ladies speedy. That kind of speedy.

Whitney-Robinson proved that with her first novel, 1999's *Spectre of the Black Rose*, part of the Ravenloft series published by

Wizards of the Coast. Whitney-Robinson had met up with a friend from her teenage years, James Lowder, who thought she'd be a good pick for a future short-story anthology. But Whitney-Robinson's fiction debut would come quicker than she'd imagined: Lowder was halfway through writing *Spectre* when his father became ill, so he suggested to Wizards that Whitney-Robinson step in as co-writer and finish what he'd started—in just six weeks. Could she really do that? Wizards wanted—or perhaps needed—to know.

"Not knowing that I couldn't, I said sure," she recalls.

She could and she did, which meant she was soon asked to do so again.

Whitney-Robinson was brought in as a replacement for another writer to pen one of seven novellas that made up 2000's *Halls of Stormweather*, the first book in the Forgotten Realms' Sembia series. That effort earned her the chance to write her own novel in the series, 2002's *Sands of the Soul*, which came with the unaccustomed benefit of a relatively normal production schedule. (Another book, *The Crimson Gold*, appeared in December.)

Last summer, with *Star Wars Galaxies* attracting avid gamers, both Lucasfilm and Del Rey thought a novel that tied in with the multiplayer online game would be a



Haden Blackman of LucasArts provided Whitney-Robinson with valuable game-world and plot advice.

good idea. But no such book had been planned. Could one be plotted, written, edited, and published on the double? Del Rey turned to Lowder and Whitney-Robinson to divide the work. When Lowder had to drop out, Whitney-Robinson said she could handle the job herself. Given her track record, who'd disagree?

An outline of *The Ruins of Dantooine* was approved in mid-August; Whitney-Robinson



started writing the next day. When interviewed by the *Insider* in early September, she estimated she had half a draft of *Ruins* completed. Under the circumstances, *Galaxies* fans will probably forgive her for admitting that yes, she's very familiar with *Star Wars* in general and *Galaxies* in particular, but no, she's played the game only a bit.

"I can't play it very long because it's addictive—and I have a book to write," she says.

The Ruins of Dantooine is a *Star Wars* *Galaxies* novel, but Whitney-Robinson stresses that playing *Galaxies* won't be a prerequisite for enjoying the book.

"It'll tie in loosely with the game but will stand alone," she says.

The heroine of *The Ruins of Dantooine* is Dusque Mistflyer, a bio-engineer plying her trade on Naboo shortly after the events of *A New Hope*. Dusque and an Ithorian colleague are in a Naboo casino when a mysterious stranger approaches them. His name is Finn Darktrin, and he has a dangerous secret: He's a spy for the Rebel Alliance. Darktrin tries to recruit Dusque, thinking she'd be excellent cover for his activities—after all, her profession lets her travel the spacelanes largely free of Imperial scrutiny. Darktrin's quarry is a Holocron that contains a list of high-level

Rebel sympathizers within the Empire's ranks—a prize that can't be allowed to fall into the hands of the Imperial agents who are also seeking it.

The novel unfolds on a number of planets familiar to *Galaxies* players, including Naboo, Lok, Corellia; and (naturally) Dantooine; and—as with the game—Dusque and Finn will cross paths with some rather famous names, such as Skywalker, Solo, Calrissian, and Organa. *Galaxies* fans will even recognize settings contributed by the game's players, such as a hotel on Naboo where animal training is a main event. Indeed, the influences run both ways: Some creatures and species seen in the book will appear in the game after publication, as will the book's main characters. (Future *Galaxies* novels are a possibility; Whitney-Robinson says, "I would love the opportunity to do more.")

So how'd Whitney-Robinson learn to be the writing equivalent of Han Solo's quick draw?

Her short answer is that "my parents never told me there was something I couldn't do." The longer answer is that she's always had tales to tell—and some interesting opportunities to tell them. While today she's a marine biologist based in Seattle, Whitney-Robinson spent three years with the Peace Corps in

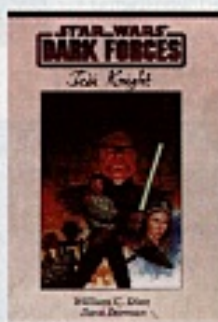
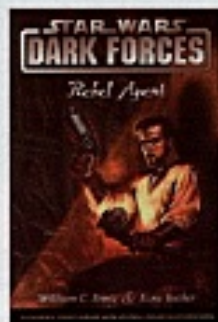
Africa, much of it spent living in a mud hut in Cameroon lit only by a kerosene lantern. (She was once mistaken for a reincarnated witch doctor, but that's a tale for another column.)

Cameroon is close to the equator, which Whitney-Robinson says meant, "I had a long night every night." She took advantage of those nights, reading hundreds of books ranging "from classics to bodice-rippers" and writing stories for her own enjoyment—sometimes 20, 30, or even 40 pages of handwritten tales a night.

"I'd never been in a situation in my life where I was so focused," she recalls, adding that "it was a good time to practice."

All that writing by kerosene lamp doesn't mean Whitney-Robinson's stock of stories is exhausted. Some are emerging now: She recalls coming across a drawing she did years and years ago of a woman with Han Solo, her favorite *Star Wars* character as a girl. The drawing, she says, is Dusque and Han—even if it took years for the world to put Whitney-Robinson in a position to turn a sketch into a story.

"I've been waiting for the opportunity to put pen to paper," Whitney-Robinson says. "These deadlines are my opportunities." 🗓



Let the Reader Win

Galaxies has taken *Star Wars* videogaming to an entirely new level, but *The Ruins of Dantooine* isn't the first *Star Wars* fiction to draw on the work of LucasArts' game wizards.

The success of the acclaimed *X-Wing* space-combat simulation game helped pave the way for nine *X-Wing* novels from Bantam: Five were penned by Michael A. Stackpole, four by Aaron Allston, and all starred Wedge Antilles and the

pilots of Rogue Squadron, not to mention the Irregulars of Wraith Squadron. The *X-Wing* game materials included a novella, Russel DeMaria's "The Farlander Papers," which established Keyan Farlander as the third pilot to survive the Battle of Yavin. (He reappears in *The New Jedi Order*.)

Another celebrated early *Star Wars* game was *Dark Forces*, a first-person shooter introducing the raffish Force-sensitive Kyle Katarn. In 1997 and 1998, Dark Horse published three illustrated novellas by William C. Dietz retelling the events of

Dark Forces and its sequel *Jedi Knight*, with beautiful illustrations by a trio of artists.

And finally, fans will want to track down *Jed's Honor* and *Scoundrel's Luck*, a pair of tales published by West End Games in 1990. Both are written in the choose-your-own-adventure format, but don't let that put you off two exciting additions to the adventures of Luke Skywalker and Han Solo. If nothing else, their author has a familiar name: Troy Denning.

Battlefields

by Daniel Wallace

From Ventress to Valorum, the Clone Wars Envelop the Galaxy

The epic *Battle of Jabiim* has finally reached its conclusion, but don't take a breather just yet. *Star Wars Republic* continues the saga of the Clone Wars with three rapid-fire issues that take readers from the heart of evil to the center of politics to the most desolate corner of the galaxy's rim.

Ventress Stands Alone

Star Wars Republic #60 promises to give fans all the dirt on Asajj Ventress—Count Dooku's secret weapon and the Clone Wars' preeminent villainess. It's the perfect appetizer for the Cartoon Network animated microseries, in which Ventress plays a starring role.

"Basically, we hear Ventress' backstory from one of her enemies," says writer Haden Blackman, who is joined on the issue by artist Brian Ching. "It explains how she was trained in the Force and why she believes Obi-Wan and the other Coruscant Jedi are 'false Jedi.' It should give readers much greater insight into her motivations." Fans will also get to see Obi-Wan Kenobi stage a jailbreak. A word of advice: never get between a Jedi and freedom.

The one-shot issue, entitled "Hate and Fear," ties into the animated series in ways both obvious (the crimson planet Rattatak) and subtle (the unspoken cause behind Ventress' simmering hate). Look also for a similar visual style. "The cartoon guys took Ventress' backstory and adapted a very small part of it for the series," says Blackman. "I went into more detail in the comic, showing parts of her childhood and her early training in the ways of the Jedi. The artist for

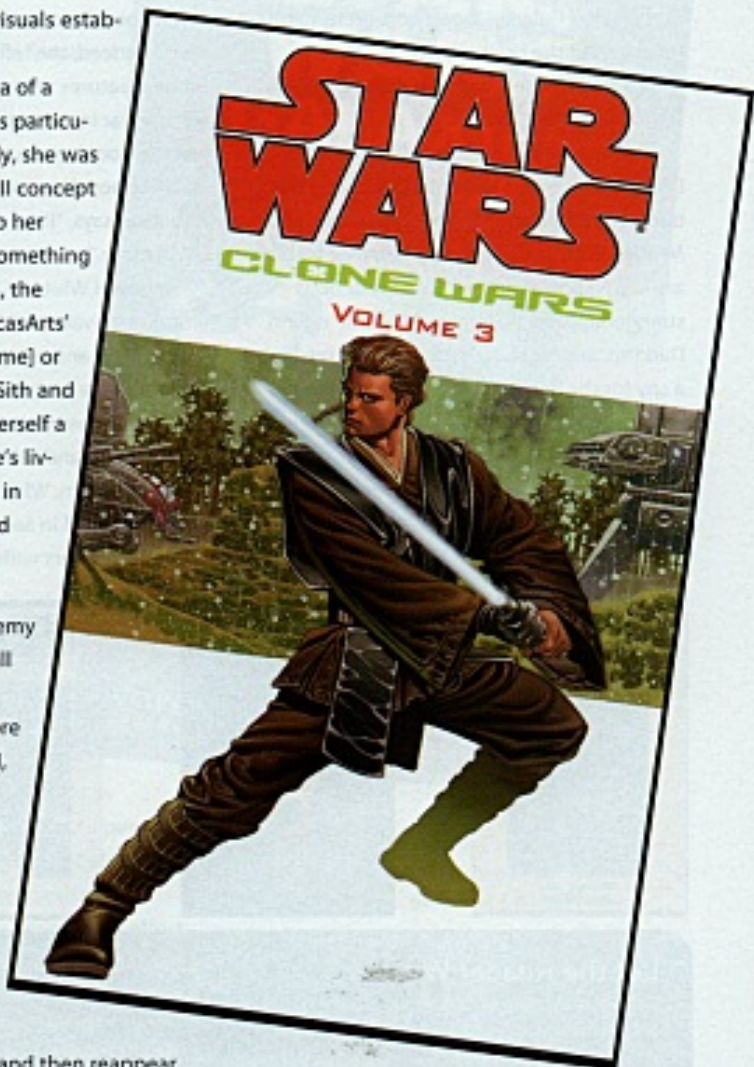
the issue will be using visuals established by the cartoon."

For Blackman, the idea of a female Dark Jedi villain is particularly compelling. "Visually, she was based on some Episode II concept art, but then I worked up her backstory to make her something other than Komari [Vosa, the female antagonist of LucasArts' Bounty Hunter video game] or Darth Maul. She's not a Sith and doesn't even consider herself a Dark Jedi. She thinks she's living up to the Jedi ideals in ways that Obi-Wan could never do."

When asked whether Asajj Ventress or the enemy bounty hunter Durge will see some resolution to their character arcs before the release of Episode III, Blackman answers with an emphatic yes. "I can't divulge too much," he says, "other than to say that one of them will probably die, and one will be drastically changed—both physically and emotionally—and then reappear when we start telling stories set in the Episode III–IV time frame."

Meanwhile, Back on Coruscant...

While soldiers trade shots on the battlefield, politicians fire insults in the halls of



Anakin Skywalker is the focus of *Clone Wars Volume 3*, which collects the *Last Stand on Jabiim* stories from issues #55–58.



government. *Republic* #61 takes a break from the front lines to show how the war has progressed on the galaxy's capital.

"Bail [Organa] is the central figure of this story as we glimpse some of what may feed into his later discontent with the Empire," explains writer John Ostrander. Other familiar faces in the issue include Mon Mothma (already revealed by Lucasfilm to have a role in Episode III) and ex-chancellor Finis Valorum.

Last seen in Episode I, Valorum seemed to be the personification of failure: well-meaning but hopeless when targeted by Palpatine's political machine. Ostrander thinks Valorum got a raw deal. "He was an honest and capable politician up against an insidious adversary and a bureaucracy that couldn't be managed," he says. "And he has changed since we've last seen him. He's less naive. You'll get a glimpse of the sort of role he could play."

Artist Brandon Badeaux illustrates this tale of negotiation and betrayal, but don't expect it to be an issue filled only with talking heads. A spectacular pirate attack in the opening pages is what prompts Palpatine to push for new "security measures," and the ensuing political firestorm leads to an ending that will shock readers. "Not all the

[Clone Wars] battles were fought on the battlefield," says Ostrander. "I would suggest the real battles for the soul of the Republic were being fought—and lost—in the Senate chamber."

Who's Scruffy-Looking?

Remember how cool those bounty hunters were in *The Empire Strikes Back*—working on behalf of the Empire but not truly answerable to them? If you like hired guns with idiosyncratic senses of personal style, then rejoice! Bounty hunters are back.

In *Star Wars Jedi: Aayla Secura*, readers learned that someone had put a bounty on the heads of Jedi. In *Republic* #62, the hunters come a-calling. Obi-Wan and clone trooper Alpha, trying to escape Separatist territory and reach the Republic line, find themselves on a virulently unfriendly Outer Rim world. The bounty hunters who ambush them are ready and willing to take down a Jedi, superhuman powers or no.

Anakin Skywalker also puts in an appearance, although he's been left masterless since Obi-Wan's presumed death during the Battle of Jabiim. "Anakin is now the Padawan, at least temporarily, to Ki-Adi-Mundi," says Ostrander. "He's having dreams—visions—of Obi-Wan still being

Continue, the Clone Wars Do

Last Stand on Jabiim, volume three of the trade paperback collections of Dark Horse's Clone Wars comics, hits on February 25. If you missed the epic Battle of Jabiim that consumed issues #55–58 of *Star Wars Republic*, now's your chance. Volume Three will collect the entire story arc, including the first appearance of those cool McQuarrie-inspired prototype AT-AT walkers.

alive but in pain or danger. The last time he had that was when his mother died. We all know how he reacted to that. Will Anakin abandon his duty to look for his Master and friend? He wouldn't be Anakin if he didn't."

The idea of a bounty on Jedi has been seen before, in the New Jedi Order series of novels that chronicles the invasion of the alien Yuuzhan Vong. "I don't think it negates the value of doing it here," says Ostrander. "It makes a sort of sense. A great way of incapacitating your enemy is to take out the command structure, especially when you've got clones."

"The real question becomes, who is hiring the bounty hunters? Dooku and Sidious are the obvious choices. So are they behind the bounty hunters or is it someone else entirely? Who else would have a reason?"



Villains, Rogues, and . . . Career Politicians?

If you need a primer on the major elements appearing in the next few issues of *Star Wars Republic*, be sure to check out the following past comics:

"The New Face of War," *Star Wars Republic* #51–52, Dark Horse Comics, 2003 (also available as part of the trade paperback *Clone Wars Volume 2: Victories and Sacrifices*). Asajj Ventress' most prominent features are her shaved head and her double lightsabers, but this tale was the first to explore her cruelty and her utter contempt for the Jedi Order. Her origin story in *Republic* #60 goes a long way toward explaining her actions in past Clone Wars comics, not to mention the Cartoon Network animated series.

Jedi Council: Acts of War #1–4, Dark Horse Comics 2000 (available in trade paperback). Chancellor Valorum tries to defuse an uprising of nasty reptiles on the planet Yinchon by sending in the Jedi. A bloodbath ensues. Valorum's political debacle in this series helped pave the way for his inglorious ouster as Supreme Chancellor in *The Phantom Menace*.

Star Wars Underworld #1–5, Dark Horse Comics 2000–2001 (available in trade paperback). The bounty hunters who menace Obi-Wan and Alpha, the clone commando in *Republic* #62, will find their spiritual cousins in this bounty hunter romp set during the time of the classic trilogy. Pitting every hunter from Boba Fett to Greedo against one another in pursuit of a priceless relic, *Underworld* reveals the reason why bounty hunters could never take down the Jedi Order on their own—they're in it only for themselves.

Scouting the Galaxy

by Steve Sansweet

How Do I Answer This One? Your Advice Sought! Is Script Authentic? Will Curry Leak? Is Revenge Real?

Sometimes I'm in a quandary about what letters to answer or what replies to give. I tear open an envelope, read something, and laugh out loud—but for the wrong reasons. Or I quickly scan an email and think, "Hello? What planet are you from?"

I learned at an early age not to make fun at someone else's expense. My Insider editors think I've occasionally come close to the line, and I appreciate having a good, sensitive editor. It's not nice, and it's not pleasant when you're on the receiving end. On the other hand, there are degrees of poking a little gentle fun—especially with close friends—and laughing with someone may be fine.

This mild soul-searching comes about after opening a letter with a fairly familiar red stamp on the outside: "Mailed from a

State Correctional Institution." I've received a number of good letters from such collectors, but this one was a head-scratcher. My correspondent said he loved the column and was a huge collector but was "having problems finding all the figures" he wants.

How do I answer a question like that? Do I ignore his present location and situation, which may be temporary? Do I give a smart-aleck reply, which really isn't my style? Or do I suggest that, when he has the chance, he check out some of the great online retailers listed at any number of Star Wars sites? What would you do?

Plush Price Plunge

I recently acquired a four-foot stuffed Ewok from a friend. It comes

with a card that says "Limited Edition #231 of 3,100." The Ewok came out as a promotion for Frito Lay. My friend says it's worth about \$800, but I'm not sure. Can you help me?

Rob Banducci
Antelope, CA

Yub nub! If you mean can I get you \$800 for your plush Ewok, no way. Even new, when the Official Fan Club had the remainder of these promotional pieces for sale, they sold for \$300 each. Although they really are a cool item, in my opinion, the current market price, on a good day, is now about half that.

The Great Unscathed

A short time ago I saw 12-inch Luke Skywalker and Tauntaun figures at Toys 'R' Us. The Luke is supposed to have battle damage, which is a few bloody scratches on his face. When I looked closely at the figure it did not have the scars. I looked at another one right next to it, and that Luke did have the marks. Is the unscarred Luke worth anything, or is it just a mistake by Hasbro?

Kevin Vasquez
Superior, CO

Clearly the Luke you spotted had already been through a bacta tank bath! Seriously, Kevin, if I offered you a hot new muscle car to drive for a week, which would you choose: one painted fire-engine red or one that was still bare steel without even a primer coat? When one step in the "deco" process is missed in an Asian factory, it makes a piece less valuable, not more valuable. A true variation is





when all pieces up to a certain point in the manufacturing process are painted or molded a certain way, then changed.

Phone Home

I'm serving in the U.S. Navy aboard the U.S.S. Juneau, stationed in Japan. I bought Episode III phone cards in Malaysia and Japan. Some of them are three-dimensional. I just wondered whether they are going to be collectible or worth some money some day.

Ensign Paul Drice
Sasebo, Japan

As someone far wiser than me once said, *Always in motion the future is. It's impossible to predict what will become collectible and what will rise or fall in value.* I love phone cards (regular readers will note that there's very little in the way of Star Wars collectibles that I don't love) and have been collecting them for years. The problem is that while they are widely used in much of Asia and now Europe, they've really never caught on with the same intensity in the U.S., either as an everyday product or as a collectible. So they're sort of an unusual category, appealing mainly to trading-card collectors, who aren't willing to go searching for them because there isn't a great list compiled, or to spend big bucks. I think they will always be a peripheral collectible, and their value will be based on how

cool the individual cards look—like your lenticular ones.

Facts on Figures

Recently I bought four mint 1997 Hallmark Star Wars Christmas ornaments at a garage sale for \$60: Darth Vader (with lights and sound), Yoda, Luke Skywalker, and C-3PO with R2-D2. Was this a good buy? Also, I have an old Anakin Skywalker pewter figure with Darth Vader's helmet on the ground next to him. I've looked all over and can't find any more of these, not even at Celebration II. Are they worth anything?

David Johnson
Canton, OH

If you're satisfied with the Hallmark ornaments—and they sound like they're in great shape—then it was a good buy. It wasn't what I'd call a garage sale or bargain price, but it was



less than what you would have paid at retail. The 1997 Anakin Skywalker–Vader helmet piece is a little scarcer than most Rowcliffe Star Wars pewter figures since it was never sold separately at retail. It was an in-pack exclusive sold with the CD-ROM Special Collector Edition of Star Wars Monopoly. They seem fairly easy to pick up on eBay, where they've gone for \$3 to \$5 in recent sales.



Caveat Emptor

I just acquired what appears to be an original movie script from *The Empire Strikes Back*, specifically a fourth draft shooting script, and wish to verify its authenticity or lack thereof. I purchased the manuscript on eBay. The pictures provided in the auction did not provide a good measure for authenticity, and the seller could not verify its authenticity. When it arrived I was astonished to find studio markings ("Property of Lucasfilm" stamped on the front page, "Fourth Draft Shooting Script" on the front cover), references directing the holder to return the piece to the Production Department upon completion of work in the film, and references to a "Red Coding Number," which is indeed found on every page. The script, dated October 24, 1978, features:



- A blue cardstock cover, front and back, with front cover emblazoned with *The Empire Strikes Back* logo and "Lucasfilm Ltd."
- Copyright by The Chapter II Company on first page.
- A caution to the bearer that only those scripts bearing a Red Coding Number are true company scripts. My Red Coding Number is 3x37.
- The script is bound between two interlocking metal bars.
- In the text of the script, where in the movie Vader reveals that he is Luke's father, there is only the line "Insert B— Dialogue Added Here."

I didn't pay very much for it, but now that it's arrived my interest has been piqued. While I enjoy the piece, I am

very curious as to its authenticity and wish to set my mind at ease.

Scott Rinehart
Saint John, NB, Canada

Scott, I'm awfully glad you said you didn't pay very much for the piece, that you've been skeptical, and that you'd enjoy it regardless. For as that little voice in the back of your head has been nagging you, what you have is a clever forgery. Why am I so certain? Because I own # 6x86! These forged scripts weren't uncommon on the convention circuit in 1981, and sold for \$25. Everyone knew then that they weren't real but, in a perverse way, admired the inventiveness of the anonymous maker who went through a lot of trouble to hand-stamp the pages—and with different numbers for each script. The problem is that years later some people don't know the origins of these forgeries and might try to pass them off as authentic. As always, buyer beware!

Yeah, But Is He Bulletproof?

I have a rather interesting *Star Wars* figure that I made the mistake of opening when I was younger. My brother bought it for me in 1997 and said that it was a rare figure: a B'omarr Monk. I would like to know the usual things, like its rarity, value, and how many were made.

Derrick Bucey
Roseburg, OR

Well, here's another one of those letters that made me laugh out loud—at myself. After reading the first sentence, Derrick, I thought you were going to say you had ripped a double-telescoping Luke vinyl-caped Jawa off a 12-back card. But your "crime" was a much more recent one—and has a much cheaper "fix." The Monk was a Hasbro Internet exclusive and came in a taped plastic bag in a white cardboard mailing box with a small instruction sheet. It can be replaced in mint condition from eBay for \$10 to \$15.

Hasbro never dis-



closes how many of an individual figure it makes. If you want to wait a few months, the Monk is being released again, this time in a package, as part of Hasbro's regular line.

Revenge Or Rip-Off?

I purchased a *Revenge of the Jedi* T-shirt at a local flea market for \$10. I really don't care about the worth, but I was wondering if it was the real deal or not. I included a photo of the tag in case it can be of any help.

Chris Oatman
Hansen, ID

A dangerous combination, Chris: Revenge, flea market, and \$10. That's a near guaranteed trip to Bootlegland. And that's the trip you took.



There are some real Revenge shirts, made in very limited quantities, but they are mainly printed with just the logo and were done for internal Lucasfilm purposes. The tag really isn't of much help, since back then even legitimate designs could be put on several different brands of T-shirts. A more telling note is the absence of any trademark or copyright line.

DiVinyl

My Dad has a two-record album of *Star Wars* produced in 1977 by 20th Century Records. The records contain an original soundtrack to the movie produced by John Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra. The records are in excellent condition, although the album cover shows some signs of wear. Are you able to tell me whether these are valuable?

Kristian Macaron
Albuquerque, NM

Well, the music is priceless, as we all know. But the technology has just about passed us



by, and there are few among us who still have turntables with which to play these great LPs. So its value is strictly a collectible one, which depends on things like whether all the loose paperwork that came with the double album is intact, whether the sleeves that protected the records are there, and the condition of the album cover. Even under the best of circumstances, because so many of these soundtrack albums were produced, the market is saturated. Recent sales have been in the range of \$1 to \$10, although that didn't stop one overly hopeful seller from starting his recent auction at an eye-popping \$199! I'm sure he heard something on the disks that I couldn't.

Red Hot

Back in 2000 I purchased on eBay a box of Japanese curry that was a tie-in with *The Phantom Menace*. Inside is a round card featuring a character on it and a foil bag of curry. The problem is that I think one day the curry is going to ooze out of the bag, but since it's decorated with a *Star Wars* logo burst, I'm

reluctant to just toss it out. Eating the curry is out of the question. Any solutions?

Mary Jo Fox
Vienna, VA

Shame on you, Mary Jo. You should have a much more adventurous appetite. Of course, I have no desire to eat the stuff either, so I shouldn't be picking on you. And I'm not the one to talk since I still have Japanese rice snacks sealed in cups from 1978! I could be wrong, and I wouldn't want to subject them to a steamroller test, but these curry bags seem particularly well-sealed to me—some sort of pressure and heat-welding process that I think might outlast life as we know it! If you're not

as certain, you can always carefully open part of one side with an X-acto blade and squeeze those little beef and carrot chunks out along with the curry. I suggest heavy-duty gloves and a mask. ☹

Scouting for Answers?

Please send your questions and comments about collectibles to: SCOUTING THE GALAXY, P.O. Box 2898, Petaluma, CA 94953-2898. Or you may email them to scouting@palzo.com, making sure to also put SCOUTING in the subject line and YOUR HOMETOWN in the email along with your FULL NAME. Letters won't be answered without both. Individual replies aren't possible because of time constraints, but we'll answer the questions of broadest interest in the column. Letters are edited for grammar, sense, and length.



Meet Timothy ZAHN



Buckets on, troopers! Don your best *Star Wars* duds and join fellow fans at a nearby bookstore to meet best-selling author Timothy Zahn. Each evening will include a signing, so it's the perfect time to have your copy of *Star Wars: Survivor's Quest* personalized. Show off your knowledge of the galaxy far, far away in the trivia contest, and you could leave with a fabulous door prize. Don't forget to snap a photo for *Star Wars Insider*!

Wednesday, February 4 @ 7:00 PM
Barnes & Noble #2933
14709 US 31 North
Carmel, IN 46032
Store Phone: (317) 844-2501

Thursday, February 5 @ 7:00 PM
Books & Company
350 E. Stroop Road
Dayton, OH 45429
Store Phone: (937) 296-6540

Friday, February 6 @ 7:00 PM
Joseph-Beth Bookseller
161 Lexington Green Circle
Lexington, KY 40503
Store Phone: (859) 273-2911

Saturday, February 7 @ 4:00 PM
Olsson's Books & Records
2111 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201
Store Phone: (703) 525-4227

Sunday, February 8 @ 4:00 PM
Borders Books & Music #253
5533 Urbana Pike
Frederick, MD 21704
Store Phone: (301) 624-1577

Monday, February 9 @ 7:00 PM
Joseph Beth Bookseller
Shops at Shaker Square
13217 Shaker Square
Cleveland, OH 44120
Store Phone: (216) 751-3300

Tuesday, February 10 @ 7:30 PM
Barnes & Noble #2614
2100 North Snelling Ave.
Roseville, MN 55113
Store Phone: (651) 639-9256

Wednesday, February 11 @ 7:00 PM
Borders Books & Music #221
Crossroads Mall
50 S. Main Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84144
Store Phone: (801) 355-6899

Thursday, February 12 @ 7:00 PM
Mysterious Galaxy Books
7051 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92111
Store Phone: (619) 268-4747

Friday, February 13 @ 7:00 PM
Barnes & Noble #2743
7777 Edinger Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
Store Phone: (714) 897-8781

Monday, February 16 @ 7:00 PM
Waldenbooks #0406
270 Southcenter Shopping Center
Seattle, WA 98188
Store Phone: (206) 246-0888

For those who cannot make it to a bookstore event, Tim Zahn will be doing a special e-signing on Tuesday, February 17. Orders for signed copies of *Star Wars: Survivor's Quest* will be taken online beginning December 10, 2003 and ending on February 7, 2004. Payment will be taken via PayPal. For more information, log onto <http://www.e-signings.com>.

From Basic Wave 6: The Battle of Endor
Han Solo briefly disguised himself as an AT-ST pilot to gain
access to the Endor shield-control bunker.

Mindful of the Future

By starwars.hasbro.com

» Last August, a few folks from Hasbro had the good fortune of visiting the set of Episode III in Sydney, Australia. Those of you who subscribe to Hyperspace on starwars.com might have seen Pablo Hidalgo's set diary entry describing the trip. It was a wonderful opportunity to get a head start on planning 2005 toys. It also gave Hasbro the opportunity to work very closely with Gentle Giant to ensure they had scans of poses and accessories that would be useful in sculpting new action figures.

The Hasbro team was able to walk through areas like the Creature Shop, and see things that had already been shot or that would be shot after the visit. This gave team members a good idea of what would and wouldn't translate well into toys. They were also able to get a feel for the prominence of different characters in the movie. Of course, since George Lucas will be editing the movie long after Hasbro starts manufacturing toys, there is a certain element of luck involved in trying to guess how much screen time a character will get. But understanding the story this far in advance

should help Hasbro make good decisions, and the invitation and cooperation received from Lucasfilm were appreciated.

Of course, for the next 18 months the Hasbro team will have to keep what they saw under wraps; however, they can discuss their product plans for the first half of 2004. By the time this issue ships to subscribers, the first 2004 Hasbro action figures might already have reached retail outlets. So that retailers can restock their shelves right after Christmas, product has to begin shipping as early as November, so sometimes these toys show up in stores before the end of the year.

National Distribution

As mentioned in previous installments of "Toy Box," each wave of new **Basic figures** will have a theme, with an emphasis on the original trilogy. The themes for the first five waves



Starting in March, Target will carry exclusive figures packaged with plastic "glasses" reminiscent of vintage Star Wars drink promotions.

of figures appeared in issue 71 of *Star Wars Insider*. Wave 6, The Battle of Endor, includes Han Solo as an AT-ST driver, General Madine, and General Lando Calrissian. Look for images of these figures on starwars.hasbro.com next month. Basic figures are expected to be carried by all retailers.

Ultra figures include some of the biggest characters and accessories from the *Star Wars* galaxy. There will be six new Ultra figures in 2004, and some older items might be lightly distributed as well. All major toy sellers are likely to distribute the Ultra figures.

Three new **Unleashed figures** are planned for the first half of 2004. As previously announced on starwars.hasbro.com, they are Chewbacca, Luke Skywalker (X-Wing Pilot), and a Clone Trooper. In addition, four previously released Unleashed figures will return in new-look *Star Wars* packaging. These will be Slave Leia, Luke Skywalker (Jedi), Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Darth Sidious. Distribution for this line is anticipated to increase in 2004.

Most retailers will continue to offer both basic and electronic **lightsabers**.

A Red Leader version of the X-Wing Fighter will be a Toys 'R' Us exclusive early this year.



Retail Exclusives

As revealed in the last issue of *Insider*, a line of eight figures based on **Cartoon Network's Clone Wars** animated micro-series will be sold exclusively at Target. Beginning in March, Target will also offer action figures packaged with plastic reproductions of the classic glasses of the original trilogy from the '70s and '80s, this time with scenes from all five movies.

Hasbro wants to keep a 3-3/4" vehicle on shelf for kids just getting into the *Star Wars* galaxy. A rotation of vehicles will be available at Toys 'R' Us throughout the year, starting

with a **Red Leader** version of the X-Wing at the beginning of 2004.

After a very successful introduction of Scene Packs in 2003, the **Jedi Council** sets at Toys 'R' Us will continue in 2004 so fans can re-create the entire council scene, including the center piece. The first set for 2004 will include Yoda, Qui-Gon Jinn, and Ki-Adi-Mundi.

Look for new **four packs** in 2004, including the "Skirmish at Carkoon" set, exclusively at Toys 'R' Us—and watch out for more great exclusives in the fall! 🍌

Ask Hasbro

Would Hasbro consider producing more Expanded Universe figures? Is there any chance characters such as Quinlan Vos, who appears in the *Star Wars: Republic Clone Wars* comics, could be included in the new line of Clone Wars figures?

There is always a possibility that Hasbro will create more Expanded Universe figures in the future, since the toy license extends until 2018. For the 2003 Clone Wars series, Hasbro focused on the key characters, but revisiting the Clone Wars is still a possibility. The 2004 figures will primarily focus on the original trilogy, and in 2005 the focus shifts to Episode III, but that still leaves 13 years to explore some of the other characters.

Will Hasbro ever release vehicles to go along with the 12" figures?

That's an interesting question. Never say "never," but right now there are no plans for vehicles that large. Some of the 3-3/4"-scale vehicles, such as the X-wing and the Republic gunship, are extremely large already, so creating them in 12" scale is not practical. The price point would be so high that demand probably would be insufficient to justify the project for Hasbro, your interest notwithstanding.

I have noticed in the past few years a somewhat frustrating trend: "retread" figures of main characters. I don't mind different versions of Padmé, who has many different costumes, but the Jedi, the Fetts, and the Sith Lords all essentially wear one costume each throughout the movies, so what's the point? There are countless characters from the movies that have never been made into action figures, many of them prominent and all very cool. If I'm wrong, I'll eat bantha poodoo!

Fortunately for you, there's no bantha poodoo nearby! Most of the characters that haven't yet been made are not really a big part of the action, and core characters always outsell tertiary characters. Rereleases of the core characters also allow kids who are just getting into *Star Wars* to find a favorite character like Darth Maul on the pegs. Hasbro's objective for the Collection 1 figures is to make characters from specific scenes that kids will want to re-create at home. You'll notice that many of the Collection 2 figures, however, are new characters that haven't been done before, and that trend will continue throughout 2004.



From Basic Wave 4: The Battle of Yavin

General Jan Dodonna devised the attack plan at the Battle of Yavin, and presided over the medal ceremony following the conflict. Gold Leader, aka Jon "Dutch" Vander, commanded the Y-wing squadron that attacked the first Death Star. Though a TIE Fighter Pilot has been included with several vehicles, it hasn't appeared on a card since 1996.

**From Basic Wave 3:
Jabba's Palace**

The Whiphid J'Quille was known as "Tooth Face" during the production of *Return of the Jedi*.



Luke Skywalker introduced himself in holographic form to ask Jabba for a man-to-Hutt meeting about a certain wall decoration.



Lando Calrissian disguised himself as the skiff guard Tamtel Skreej to gain access to Jabba's Palace to help rescue Han Solo.



Tarus Spijek is an Elom, and a former Rebel spy.





Rapotuanalantonee Tivtotolon, better known as Rappertunie, augmented the Max Rebo Band with his groudli harmonique.



From Ultra Wave 2:

The same assortment that features the new Jabba the Hutt also includes Jabba's Court Denizens, a three-pack containing Bubo, Wol Cabasshite, and a B'omarr Monk.



KEEPING SCORE

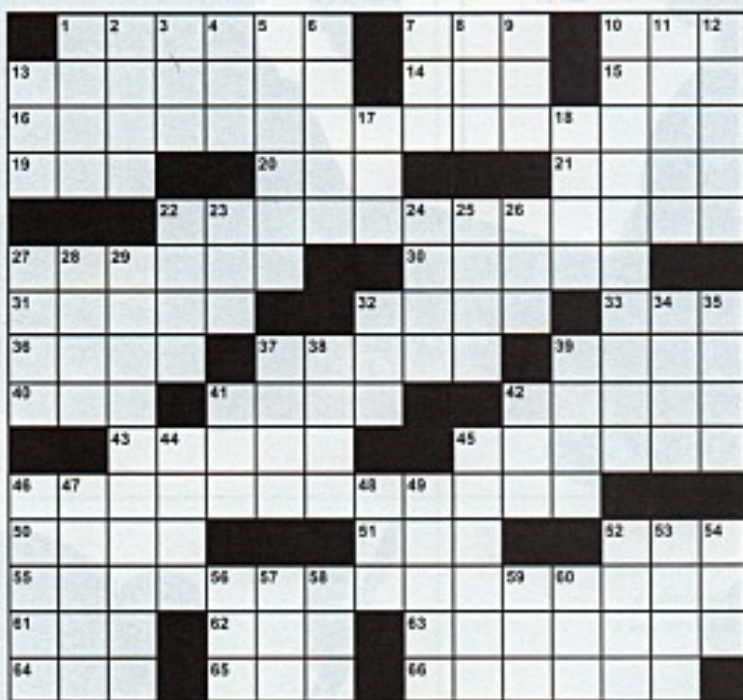
by Mike Selinker

ACROSS

- 1 Harmful
- 7 '91 22-Across film
- 10 Robert Osborne's film network
- 13 '95 22-Across film
- 14 Christopher who plays Tyrannus
- 15 "Bali ____" (South Pacific song)
- 16 '77 22-Across film, for short
- 19 Rogue Squadron pilot Plour ____
- 20 Actress Carrere
- 21 Kiddie book *The Cat Who Wore ____ on Her Head*
- 22 His credits include every *Star Wars* film
- 27 Having feet, biologically
- 30 Started sabacc
- 31 Movie theater chain
- 32 Fruit coating
- 33 Cheering sound
- 36 Dollar bills
- 37 '68 22-Across TV production
- 39 End, in Esperanto
- 40 Competitor of West End Games, once
- 41 Object in the Geonosis belt
- 42 Victor who played King Tut on the *Star Trek* series
- 43 Ledger of *A Knight's Tale*
- 45 Hungarian composer Bela
- 46 '89 22-Across film *Down on the ____*
- 50 Futurist magazine
- 51 Oiled senator Tolik ____ in *Before the Storm*
- 52 Grr, for 3-Down
- 55 '02 22-Across film
- 61 Parisian article
- 62 Last word in an '81 22-Across film
- 63 '97 22-Across film
- 64 Alec Guinness, e.g.
- 65 Mao ____-Tung
- 66 Turn in

DOWN

- 1 Lightsaber drone, e.g.
- 2 "Peek-!"
- 3 Medics, briefly
- 4 Medieval word of despair
- 5 Episode ____ *Phantom Menace*
- 6 Entered hurriedly
- 7 "On the Six" singer, to her fans
- 8 Fire, in French



- 9 Artax portrayed Baker, for short
- 10 '03 22-Across film
- 11 Bounce
- 12 *Star Wars* RPG book
- 13 Planet of the ____
- 13 ____-li
- 17 Crow call
- 18 Feature of a tauntaun
- 22 '75 22-Across film
- 23 They're often ended by TDs
- 24 "____ say so before!" (Solo)
- 25 Director Riefenstahl
- 26 Anekin, at the time of *The Phantom Menace*
- 27 '76 22-Across film *Family ____*
- 28 Menn, many moons
- 29 '78 22-Across film *The ____*
- 32 Duel (Marvel Comics *Star Wars* hero)
- 34 Gemini
- 35 '91 22-Across film
- 37 *The Empire Strikes Back* ice planet
- 38 Rebel base on 37-Down
- 39 '78 22-Across film *The ____*
- 41 Wamp ____
- 42 ____-train crystals (Alliance Intelligence Reports mineral)
- 44 Jango Fett: *Bounty Hunter* author ____ Arnold
- 45 ____ as Angel ('71 B movie)
- 46 Concern for a cinematographer
- 47 Certain Middle Easterner
- 48 Acronym that means "Just so you know"
- 49 Villainous Grand Vizier foe of *Aladdin*
- 52 Error ____ (between-scenes interlude)
- 53 Term of respect often heard from John Wayne
- 54 Word in both titles of 22-Across' sequels to 62-Across
- 56 Object worn by the hero of 62-Across
- 57 "____ C" (Riechie's mom, to Forzie)
- 58 ____ out (get by)
- 59 It can end "human"
- 60 "____ the Force, Luke"

Answers

to this puzzle appear on page 94 of this issue.

Playbill to sign, when the handler came out and informed us that Mark would be out in 10 minutes! My anxiety at meeting this icon was growing when suddenly I heard these dreadful words: "Is that a Star Wars poster? I'm sorry, he won't sign anything Star Wars."

It seems Mark Hamill has a thing about scalpers selling his signature on eBay. I was immediately crushed. Curse you, eBay reseller scum!

He eventually came out and was more than gracious signing programs, posing for pictures and chatting up a storm, even though we were told he couldn't talk!

It was a major moment in any Star Wars fan's existence, but somewhat bittersweet since the one item I would have loved for him to sign was shunned. I did try a few times but in the end decided not to force the issue since he was being so nice in every other respect.

I wanted to share my tale in an effort to inform other autograph-seekers that even the best-laid plans and a confirmed celebrity contact still do not guarantee a signature on that coveted Star Wars item.

JEFFREY CHANDLER
MOHEGAN LAKE, NY

We've received a few other recommendations from fellow fans for Six Dance Lessons, and we're working

very hard to persuade the boss that we need a trip to New York to write the official Insider review.

Leave It to Oprah

In Insider #71's "Desperately Seeking Bruce" letter, Pam was seeking a person she met at Star Wars Weekends. I must admit it was a heartfelt story, but aren't there enough talk shows on the air for this kind of thing so that valuable Star Wars Insider space doesn't have to be wasted? I'm 5'10" tall with brown hair and hazel eyes; I love sports, piña colodas, and walks in the rain; and my favorite character is Salacious Crumb, but you don't see me using your magazine as a personals ad!

FRANK "LONELYHEART" PEREZ
BROOKLYN, NY

While Pam's unique situation made for a great letter, we have no plans to begin a personals section, especially after reading Frank's ad.

Keeping Up With the Sansweets

I just want to say that Insider #71 is the best one I've ever read. Not being a Hyperspace member, I was thrilled to finally see some behind-the-scenes Episode III photos. I also loved the Harrison Ford interview, not to mention the nice shot of him on the cover! With the feature on Steve Sansweet's collection, I was able

to get a preview of what my house will look like in a few more years!

MELISSA BRANCH
POWHATAN, VA

Chances are it'll take more than a few years for your collection to look like Steve's. In fact, it would probably take us one or two sequels just to do his collection justice in the magazine. In any event, we wish you luck!



I'm So Excited

In my life, I have had two major fandoms: Star Wars and Farscape. So I was excited when I heard that David Elsey and the rest of the Creature Shop team who worked on Farscape had gotten back together to work on Episode III. I was even more excited when I opened Insider #71 to the latest pictures from the set and saw Lou Elsey's familiar face hard at work on a Wookiee and with the new title of Fabrication Supervisor. I was likewise excited to see on the next page a photo of Dave Elsey himself beside a beautiful Wookiee costume. It's nice to see our crew still able to put their considerable skills to good use in the sci-fi community. I can't wait to see what else they come up with for Star Wars!

If possible, could Insider do an article on the Creature Shop and

their work on Episode III? Either way, thank you very much for the pictures from the set. It's good to see a friendly face and to see my two favorite universes come together.

ALAYNE FRONIMOS
SAN ANTONIO, TX

You can count on an interview with Dave Elsey about the Creature Shop, but since it's a place filled with wonderful secrets, it might be a little while before we can reveal what he showed off in Sydney this past summer. Yet another reason to subscribe—that's what we say.



Hand-Crafted Mandalorian

I'm a 13-year-old and have loved your magazine ever since I got my first issue about a year ago. I can't believe this is my first time writing. Attached is a picture of me in my homemade Boba Fett costume. I know it might not be much, but it's all I could afford at the time. For walking around the town, it was better than one of those five-dollar cloth-with-plastic-helmet ones. I'll never forget that night when I was walking down the street and a couple said, "Look, honey, it's Darth Vader."

CLAYTON MACLEOD
HEDGESVILLE, WV

While we hope you corrected their error, we also hope you remembered Lord Vader's command: "No disintegrations."



Star Wars: The Next Generation

When Lord Vader said "The circle is now complete," I never thought that it would apply to me, but having a child to share my love for Star Wars has truly made my experience greater. I was just seven years old when the first Star Wars was in theaters. When the last one comes out in



2005, my daughter Kayleigh will be the same age. It kind of binds the galaxy together, don't you think?

MATT "MATTYDOG" SMITH
TK-4770 JERSEY GARRISON
WEST ORANGE, NJ

Either that or it's just part of the continuing scheme to make us feel very, very old.

Bead Bag

I'm a bead weaver, and this is one of my best pieces so far. It will eventually be an amulet bag with handle. I'm still working on the handle, but I thought it might be something you'd like to publish.

CAROLYN ADAMS
DENTON, TX

MacGyver Would Be Proud

Thanks for the great article on Lorne Peterson, who remembered the special effects of the

Indiana Jones movies in *Insider* #71. As a kid, I used to dream of working for ILM in their model shop in the early days of Star Wars and Indiana Jones, although I strayed from that path and became an architect instead. (At least I still get to build models!) While I respect and am in awe of the advancements in digital technology, there was something very tangible and pioneering about the days before the computer. I enjoyed reading about how the crew solved the challenges of the climactic scene in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* using G.I. Joes, kerosene, water tanks, rods, and a "volunteer" ILM receptionist for the close-up of the last apparition. I also got a kick out of the many uses of Sonotubes (oops, not "sonatubes"), a staple of the construction industry for years, from the explosion of water out of the mine shaft in *Temple of Doom* to the fighter plane losing its wings in the tunnel in *Last Crusade*. I always knew those things could do so much more than just be forms for concrete columns and foundations!



Your still-frame analyses of various scenes from all of the Star Wars movies were great fun as well. The stories and sources behind the weapons and props are fascinating. I love the idea of "kit-bashing," where everyday plastic-model kits are raided for parts. I'll never look at the *Millennium Falcon* the same way again. I'm looking forward to future looks behind the scenes. Thanks for keeping the kid in all of us alive.

BRIAN SCHEUZGER
NORWALK, CT

Speaking of kit bashing, it's not only the ILM wizards who have mastered the art, as Jason Daily showed us.



Staying on Target

You asked for different types of art in *Insider* #70, so I'm submitting my "Assault on Imperial Star Destroyer *Decisive*" diorama. Rogue Leader is attacking the Star Destroyer bridge with proton torpedoes, while hits from Mon Cal cruiser turbolasers and previous torpedo impacts decorate the hull. It is a Finemolds 1/72-scale model kit with Expanded Universe Rogue Squadron logos and kill markings

for Wedge Antilles' post-Jedi X-wing.

I correctly colorized a scanned picture of the West End Games source-book Rogue Squadron logo, and a friend made art

from it for the Rogue logo decal, along with the kill markings. The base is a scale representation of an *Empire Strikes Back* Star Destroyer, modeling the "step" that leads up to the bridge. It is accurate except that there should be more hull surface between the raised area and the side of that step, but I was working within the space the plaque provided. The base is made out of polystyrene sheets, 1/2"-square balsa (to help position support inside), and various model-kit "greeblies" (some of which are from the Ertl *Millennium Falcon* and X-Wing kits).

I've never seen an X-wing with the Rogue Squadron logos as described in the novels in

official media or elsewhere, so I decided that putting the logo in the middle of the red flash on the top and bottom S-foils looked best.

JASON DAILY
MIAMISBURG, OH

Shady Character

In *Insider* #70, you asked for Clone Wars-inspired tattoos, so here you go.

It's on my upper right arm, and it was done at Butch's Tattoo, in Kansas City, Missouri. I also want to point out that while I went in wanting an exact copy, Butch—yes that's his real name—suggested that I go with some shading. I am glad I did.

TONY "LORD STIMPY" LAUER
LIBERTY, MO



Now that the Clone Wars micro-series has made a splash on Cartoon Network, we expect to see more and more of these reimagined Star Wars characters. Anyone got an Asajj Ventress tattoo for us?





Ballot-Stuffing

After reading your column about collectors' stories I immediately began typing mine. One of my prized possessions is the Target-exclusive LEGO Yoda that was given away in conjunction with Lays and Pepsi. To my knowledge, each Target store had one on display, and participants were encouraged to write down an educated guess as to how many LEGO bricks made up the Jedi Master. The one who had the closest guess won the display, box and all.

I filled out the entry form and included my guess. Still waiting for my wife, however, and with nothing better to do, I read the complete list of rules. One line in particular caught my eye: "Enter as often as you wish." I needed no further coaxing. I grabbed a stack of entries and proceeded to quickly fill them out, adding my guesses in increments of five or ten. I filled out over 100 entry forms, each with a different guess. I stuffed them all in the box as my wife entered the store.

Two weeks later I received a phone call from a Target store manager. He stated that I was only five bricks away from the correct guess, so he asked me to come by the store and claim my prize. I quickly hung up the phone and drove to the store. The whole way there I kept saying to myself "Stay on Target." (Okay, bad pun.)

Yoda now sits in my office high on a shelf. It has become quite a conversation piece for the numerous people who stop by my office.

Ken Lydy
Wilmington, OH



Poster Boy

The one piece in my collection that has the most interesting story would have to be my original *Star Wars* radio poster. I was a sophomore in college at Ashland University. One day my girlfriend and I were in the Radio/TV building, and we stumbled across a framed poster advertising *Star Wars* on public radio. As a kid, I had remembered listening to the broadcasts on Sunday nights when they first aired, but I hadn't realized they had made advertisements for the shows. My girlfriend knew I was a *Star Wars* fan and secretly acquired the poster. She gave it to me on my birthday as a surprise. This piece has been a unique part of my collection ever since.

Scott Aten
Akron, OH



Souvenir

I am a member of the Tennessee *Star Wars* Collectors Group. Several members of the group went to AdCon in Gatlinburg from October 3-5, but I was unable to go with them. To my surprise and delight, the other members chipped in and got me a Boba Fett figure signed at the convention by Jeremy Bulloch, who was also there. This figure is now one of my most prized *Star Wars* possessions, not because it is signed, but because the group gave it to me.

Roberta M. Matthes
Knoxville, TN

COLLECTING STORIES...

Only 92 to Go

I have been a *Star Wars* collector for about eight years now. I would love to buy anything and everything *Star Wars*, but due to budgetary constraints and since I first picked up *I, Jedi* by Michael Stackpole in 1998, I have made books the focus of my collection. I love to read not only the stories of the *Star Wars* universe but also the "facts" behind the fiction. One hundred and eighty-eight *Star Wars* books currently line my bookshelves, but unfortunately I've had the time to read only 96 of them.

In addition to books, I have accumulated numerous posters, LEGO sets, a few toys, and several random *Star Wars* items ranging from Episode I bandages, to a Darth Vader watch, to an inflatable Darth Maul chair. Posters, several of which are from *Insider*, adorn my walls, along with a few autographs and photos of *Star Wars* celebrities. A large Darth Vader street sign decorates the entrance to my cubicle at work.

Helen Silver
Dallas, TX





Recently, while Meco's amazing disco *Star Wars* theme was playing, I put on my Jango Fett suit and showed the folks how a Mandalorian gets down!

May the Force be with you.

JASON GIBNER
ANN ARBOR, MI

When we first saw Episode II, we thought he looked familiar. Wasn't he with the Village People?



His Just Desserts

My Padawan son Michael was so overjoyed when I brought home the new *Insider*, he couldn't wait to finish his dinner!

BILL ELLIS
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

Feedback

Commentary: *Insider* #71 was spectacular.

Commentary: *Star Wars* Galaxies sounds like fun, but I know for a fact that Knights of the Old Republic (KOTOR) is funny, dramatic, and downright addicting.

Question: On page 66, the Republic HoloNet News mentions Kohl Seerdon. Is this the same guy as Moff Seerdon from the N64 *Rogue Squadron* game?

(Extrapolation: KOTOR fans should understand.)

JULIE GILBERT
BRANCHBURG, NJ

Affirmation: Kohl Seerdon is indeed also Moff Seerdon.



Bustin' a Move

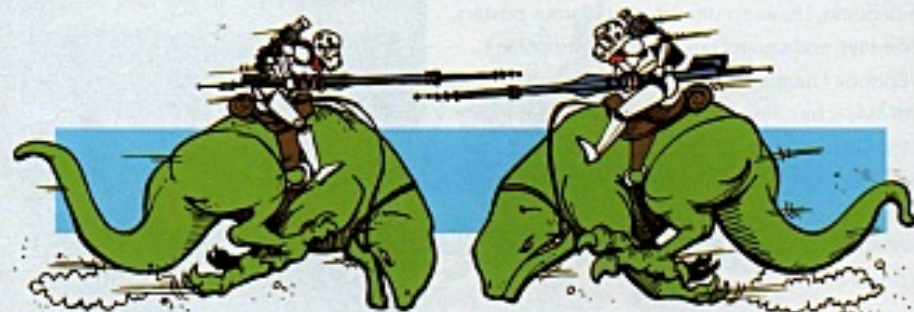
I am the cofounder and co-DJ of a popular rock-and-roll dance party called The Bang!

Yet another service we at *Insider* are happy to provide: enticing children to eat their brussels sprouts. 🥬



KEEPING SCORE

Answers to page 90 puzzle



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STAR WARS INSIDER

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Answers to Your Star Wars Questions

with Pablo Hidalgo, Internet Content Provider for starwars.com

In *Attack of the Clones*, Zam lands on what seems to be Coruscant's surface. From my knowledge the surface is a terrible place; however, what we see in the movie doesn't look too bad. What gives?

Although the original script of Episode II played up the seamy nature of Coruscant's lower depths, what we ended up seeing on screen is not the lowest place one can go on the city planet. In the final movie, the Coruscant entertainment district isn't as seedy or dangerous as was described on paper. Though Anakin and Zam seem to run on terra firma, the ferrocrete floor they tread upon is actually a roof above even deeper levels. Had they wandered off-screen, they would have discovered service ducts and chasms that lead to more treacherous depths. As described in a number of Expanded Universe sources, spelunking into Coruscant's lower levels leads to older, more decrepit foundations overrun by feral creatures, and criminals on the lam. Because the clubs and entertainment venues seen in Episode II host a number of upper-class citizens slumming for kicks, we can deduce that it isn't the height—or even the depth—of the dangers one can find beneath the Coruscant surfaces.

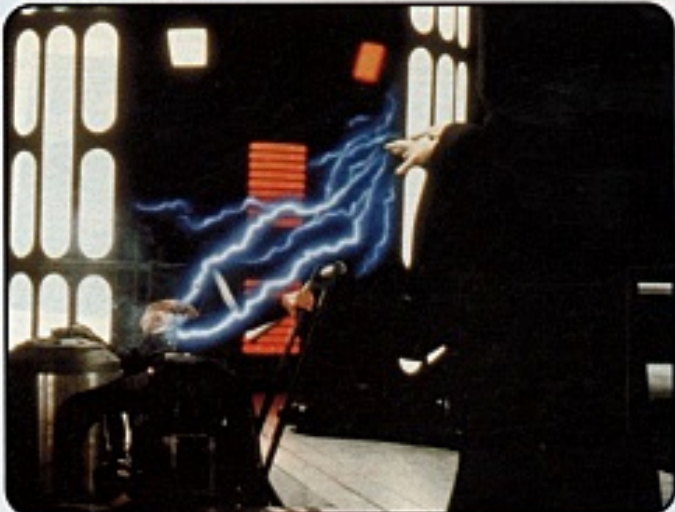


In *Return of the Jedi*, why does Luke throw away his lightsaber after he defeats Darth Vader? When he did this, he was unarmed and couldn't defend himself from the Emperor's Sith lightning.

There's no reason to believe that Luke knew the Emperor could hurl lightning. We don't know whether Yoda elaborated upon his warning not to underestimate the powers of the Emperor. Regardless of whether Luke knew or not, his casting away of his weapon had nothing to do with tactics or strategy, and had everything to do with making a point. His gesture showed Palpatine that he could throw away his aggression, and thus, that the Emperor would not be able to use that approach to lure him to the dark side as he did Anakin.

Why did Darth Vader die in *Jedi*? Luke was hit by a lot of lightning, but Vader wasn't. Did it have something to do with Palpatine?

Keep in mind that Luke did not rely on sensitive electronic machinery to sustain his life. Vader's suit, which kept him alive following his injuries sustained in Episode III, could not withstand the destructive energies of the Emperor's Force lightning. That was the biggest physical contribution to his demise. Those fans who prefer to look at things metaphysically, however, can



keep in mind that Vader's final release of the rage and loathing that sustained him for two decades also factored into his end.

Why does the dark side of the Force make Palpatine's skin decay while other Sith (like Count Dooku) look all right?

Palpatine's withered appearance has to do with something very specific that happens to him. It's something that does not happen to Count Dooku. (Plus, Palpatine is the most evil of evil.) You'll find out more in 2005.



Why did the Empire decide to make the Death Star II bigger than the first Death Star? Was there any real point to it?

The Death Star's size is dictated by the power of its superlaser. The majority of the Death Star's volume is made up of the prime weapon and the systems that support it. Because the second Death Star has an even more powerful superlaser than the first Death Star, it had to be bigger.

Endor is known as the forest moon, but there is no mention of what planet it orbits. Also, if the Death Star is the size of a small moon, why does it appear tiny in comparison to Endor?



Endor's primary planet has been the source of some continuity hiccups over the years. Endor is a moon, but its planet does not appear on-screen in *Return of the Jedi*. This omission prompted novelist James Kahn to suggest that the planet had "long since died of an unknown cataclysm and disappeared into unknown realms." Colorful, yes, but ultimately inaccurate.

If you own *From Star Wars to Indiana Jones: The Best of the Lucasfilm Archives*, turn to page 84 and take a good look at the storyboards for the opening sequence of *Return of the Jedi*. Among the elements artists at ILM identified for these shots are "Endor (moon)" and "Planet Endor." It's possible they may have misidentified the big green orb as the planet, and the small grayish speck in the background as a moon, but the point is, Endor was not supposed to be alone in space.

The Ewok television movies and animated series depict Endor's planet—also named Endor—as visible from the moon's surface: a big silvery gas-giant globe in the Endor sky. We just have to accept that it was lurking off-screen in *Return of the Jedi*.

At least one guide from the old *Star Wars* roleplaying game, *The Dark Force Rising Sourcebook*, followed the novelization's erroneous lead and claimed that Endor had no primary. When that book was reprinted as part of *The Thrawn Trilogy Sourcebook*, all references to a vanishing planet were removed. Current continuity stands that Endor circles a gas giant, and we can forget about the "unknown realms" scenario.

As for the issue of size, well, a moon is not a standard unit of

measure. A moon is simply a satellite that orbits a larger planet. In our solar system, moons come as big as Ganymede, which orbits Jupiter. It has a diameter of 5,262 kilometers—33 times that of the second Death Star, and yet it is still considered a moon. What makes Endor a moon is that it's orbiting a primary body.

Will Jabba the Hutt have a big part in Episode III?

No. Jabba does not appear in the movie, nor is he mentioned.

In *The Empire Strikes Back*, was the line "a death mark's not an easy thing to live with" supposed to be funny?

You weren't supposed to have soda squirting out of your nose, but yes, General Rieekan's line was meant to be dryly ironic.

How did Leia know her message would get to Obi-Wan? Did she know her ship was above Tatooine? If so, how did she know that the droids could even find Obi-Wan? If they landed on the other side of the planet, it could have taken them years to find him.

Leia specifically went to Tatooine searching for Obi-Wan, because her adoptive father, Bail Organa, knew that he was there. She even had an address. As she programmed R2-D2 with her holographic plea, she told the droid, "He's located in the vicinity of standardized coordinates α -1733- μ -9033, first quadrant." Artoo plugged those coordinates into the escape pod that he and Threepio took to the surface. This information can be heard in the National Public Radio dramatization of *Star Wars*. For more information on the radio dramas, see this issue's "Radio Days," on page 52. 📻



Questions?

Do you have a *Star Wars* trivia question that you can't find the answer to? Email it to us at QandA@palmd.com or send it to: **STAR WARS INSIDER**, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007. ATTN: Q&A.



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